Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition

Ravenloft™

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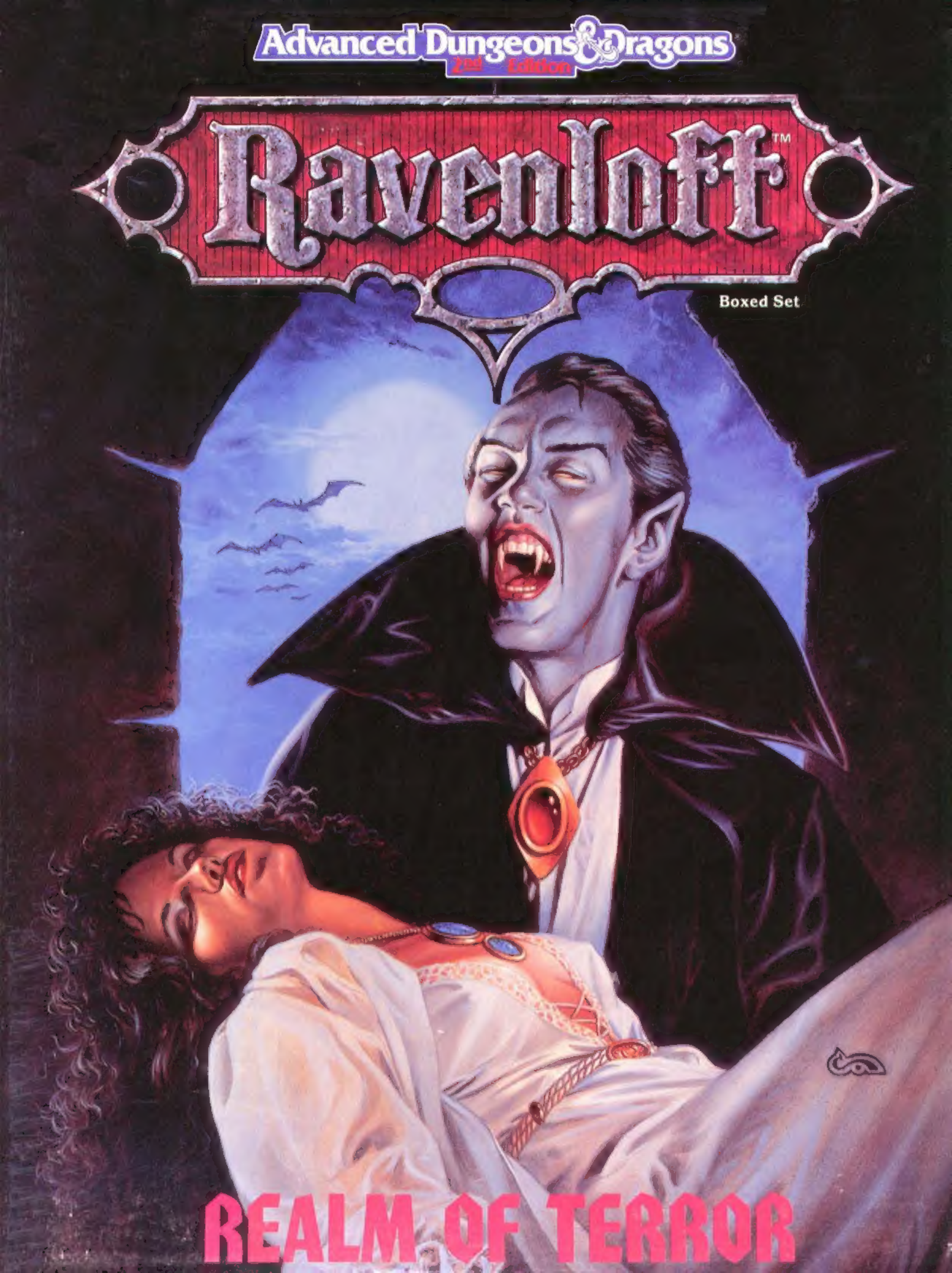

REALM OF TERROR

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REALM OF TERROR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Chapter I: From Gothic Roots 5

Chapter II: The Demiplane of Dread 8
Tome of Strahd 8
Growth of a Demiplane 8
Time Line of Events 9
Defining the Demiplane 9
Ravenloft Mists 10
Permanent Gates 11
Conjunctions 11
Domains of Ravenloft 11
Forming New Lands 12
War and Destruction 12
Leaving Ravenloft 13
Common Portal Triggers 13

Chapter III: The Reshaping of Characters 14
Warriors 14
Paladins 14
Rangers 14
Wizards 15
Priests 15
Turning Undead 15
Rogues (Thieves) 16
Nonhuman Races 16
Good and Evil 17
The Powers Check 17

Chapter IV: Fear and Horror Checks 21
Fear vs. Horror 21
Fear Checks 21
Fear Modifiers 22
Horror Checks 22
Horror Modifiers 23
Optional Rules 24

Chapter V: Werebeasts and Vampires 25
Lycanthropy 25
True (Natural) Lycanthropy 25
The Dreaded Disease 26
Sample Werebeast Triggers 26
Vampirism 27
Variety: Spice of Undeath 28
Vampire Abilities by Age 28
Sample Vampire Powers, Drains, and Weaknesses 30

Chapter VI: Curses 31
Acquiring a Curse 31
Spellcasters' Curses 31
Self-Induced Curses 31
Curse of Vengeance 32
Designing a Curse 32

Chapter VII: Gypsies 35
Gypsy Powers 35
Gypsy Lifestyle 36

Chapter VIII: Telling the Future 38
Predicting the Future in an RPG 38
Methods of Fortune-telling 38
Designing a Fortune-telling 39
When Gypsies Tell Lies 41

Chapter IX: Spells in Ravenloft 42
Priest Spells 42
Altered Priest Spells 42
Wizard Spells 45
Altered Wizard Spells 45
New Spells 50

Chapter X: Magical Items in Ravenloft 52
General Guidelines 52
Common Items with Uncommon Effects 52
Intelligent Weapons 55
Artifacts and Relics 55
Frequency of Treasure and Magic 55
New Magical Items 55

Chapter XI: Lands of the Core 60
Overview 60
Small Animals 61
Arak (ah´ ruk) 61
Arkandale (ar´ kun dale) 63
Barovia (ba ro´ via) 63
Bluetspur (bloot´ spoor) 65
Borca (bor´ ka) 66
Darkon (dar´ kon) 67
Dementlieu (day´ mon lyoo) 68
Dorvinia (dor vi´ nia) 68
Falkovnia (fol kov´ nia) 69
Forlorn (for lorn´) 70
G'Henna (ga hen´ a) 70
Gundarak (goon dar´ uk) 71
Hazlan (haz´ lun) 72
Invidia (in vi´ dia) 73
Kartakass (kar´ ta kus) 73
Keening (keen´ ing) 74
Lamordia (la mor´ dia) 75
Markovia (mar ko´ via) 76
Mordent (mor´ dent) 76
Nightmare Lands 77
Nova Vaasa (no´ va vah´ sa) 78
Sithicus (sith´ i kus) 78
Tepest (te´ pest) 79
Richemulot (reesh´ mu lo) 80
Valachan (vol´ a kon) 80
Verbrek (ver brek´) 81

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter XII: Islands of Terror 82
Farelle (fuh rel´) 83
Har' Akir (hara kir´) 83
Sanguinia (sahn gwin´ ia) 84
Souragne (soo raw´ nya) 84
Sri Raji (sree ra´ jee) 85
Staunton Bluffs 85
Vechor (ve´ kor) 86
Zherisia (zair iss´ ia) 86

Chapter XIII: The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft 88
Developing New Lords of Your Own 88
Aderre, Gabrielle (L. of Invidia) 89
Azalin (L. of Darkon) 90
d'Honaire, Dominic (L. of Dementlieu) 93
Dilisnya, Ivan (L. of Dorvinia) 93
Drakov, Vlad (L. of Falkovnia) 95
Godefroy, Wilfred (L. of Mordent) 97
Gondegal (warrior) 98
Hazlik (L. of Hazlan) 99
Kolyana, Tara (vampire hunter) 100
Lukas, Harkon (L. of Kartakass) 101
Markov, Frantisek (L. of Markovia) 103
Mordenheim, Victor (mad surgeon) 104
Mordenheim, Adam (L. of Lamordia) 108
Petrovna, Yagno (L. of G'Henna) 109
Renier, Jacqueline (L. of Richemulot) 110
Timothy, Alfred (L. of Verbrek) 111
Timothy, Nathan (L. of Arkandale) 112
Ubel, Ratik (thief, revenant) 113
Van Richten, Rudolph (thief, do-gooder) 114
Vhoriskova, Natalia (intinerant beast) 115
Von Zarovich, Strahd (L. of Barovia) 116
Weathermay, George (ranger) 119

Chapter XIV: Bloodlines 120
Boritsi Family Tree 121
D'Honaire Family Tree 122
Dilisnya Family Tree 123
Drakov Family Tree 124
Renier Family Tree 125
Timothy Family Tree 126
Von Zarovich Family Tree 127
Weathermay Family Tree 128

Chapter XV: Techniques of Terror 129
Believable Horrors 129
Isolation 130
A Villain in Control 130
Strange or Unfortunate Circumstance 131
Entrapment 131
Assaults on the Body 132
Assaults on the Mind 132
Subtle, Layered Effects 132
Plots that Tease 133
Fear in an RPG 133

Chapter XVI: Adventure Ideas 136
Experience Points 137

Appendix: New Monsters 138
Geist 138
Gremishka 139
Lycanthrope, Loup-garou 140
Odem 141
Strahd Skeleton 142
Strahd Zombie 143
Vampire, Nosferatu 144

TABLES
Common Portal Triggers 13
Turning Undead 15
Fear Modifiers 22
Horror Modifiers 23
Sample Werebeast Triggers 26
Vampire Abilities by Age 28
Sample Vampire Powers, Drains, Weaknesses 30
Altered Priest Spells* 42
Altered Wizard Spells* 45
Small Animals in Ravenloft 61
Tables of Terror . . . . . card back
Magic in Ravenloft . . . . . card back
Monsters and Militia . . . . . card back

*Back of card lists spells alphabetically.

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INTRODUCTION

or fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
—Pope, Alexander

You are about to embark on a journey into Ravenloft, a new realm of horrific adventure for the AD&D® game. Let these chapters be your guide to terror:

I. From Gothic Roots: A glimpse of the Gothic elements that color Ravenloft, from moonlight and mists to madness.

II. The Demiplane of Dread: An outline of the demiplane's history and physical traits, including how to enter and (if you're fortunate) how to escape.

III. The Reshaping of Characters: Subtle changes for certain character classes and races, and alarming changes for characters whose actions are evil.

IV. Fear and Horror Checks: Rules that translate panic and terror into AD&D game terms.

V. Werebeasts and Vampires: New twists on these classic creatures—including how Ravenloft's vampires gain power with age.

VI. Curses: How DMs can design curses; how characters can acquire, cause, and lift them.

VII. Gypsies: Startling revelations about Ravenloft's *Vistani*, who are unlike the vagabonds of any other world.

VIII. Telling the Future: How to use and design fortune-tellings in your adventures.

IX. Spells in Ravenloft: Surprising results for familiar spells, plus new magic.

X. Magical Items in Ravenloft: Strange twists on common items, plus new items.

XI. Lands of the Core: Thirty-four lands comprising Ravenloft's "continent of discontent."

XII. Islands of Terror: Eight domains floating alone in Ravenloft's Misty Border, each completely severed from other lands.

XIII. The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft: Portraits of important NPCs, from lords of darkness to lily-white defenders of justice.

XIV. Bloodlines: Genealogies of eight Ravenloft families, proving that even monsters have mothers.

XV. Techniques of Terror: Common techniques that quicken heartbeats.

XVI. Adventure Ideas: Tips for designing RAVENLOFT™ adventures, plus story ideas.

New Monsters: Seven new creatures that will horrify and haunt your players.

Chapter I:
FROM GOTHIC ROOTS . . .

Dark, gloomy castles, desolate landscapes, black clouds racing against the moon—these are the trappings of the Gothic tradition. Early Gothics were stories of mystery, fear, and desire—of heroines imprisoned in a fortress, their purity and sanity assaulted by the evil lord of the manor. Later novels, such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, toss the heroine to the sidelines, and "evil" takes center stage. This is the classic horror in which Ravenloft has its roots. It can creep into any campaign, in any world, if you know the elements that give it life . . .

The Nature of Gothic Horror

Fear is at the heart of every Gothic, but it is not born of shock and gory detail. Modern horror may routinely slice, dice, and disembowel its victims to create fear. But Gothic horror relies on subtler techniques. It teases and taunts its victims unrelentingly, with terrors shrouded in mist. By the time their true nature is clear, death by an ordinary knife would seem a relief.

In a slasher film, the question is not so much what will happen as when. When the story ends, the world will again be mundane, if only you can avoid the maniac in the closet with the cleaver. But in a tale of Gothic horror, "what" will happen is something sinister and unknown. A sense of danger and foreboding permeates the atmosphere. A dark mystery underlies the horrors, and—despite all warnings to the contrary—the characters are compelled to unravel it. These "innocents" are trapped in a whirlpool of conflicting emotion—driven by a desire to experience the awful truths they sense are real, and dreading it all the while. With each step, they discover that the world is larger and more twisted than they once supposed, and that man is necessarily small, helpless, and naive.

Dark Plots and Antiheroes

Traditional Gothic plots involve strange birthmarks, family curses, and bastard children whose origins are at best uncertain. Deformities are commonplace. A scar, a hump, enormous hands, or bulging eyes—some singular affliction makes the whole grotesque. Ancient secrets abound, promising death or despair to those who reveal them. The sins of ancestors (who are not always "dearly departed") form the legacy of those alive today. Of course, the unlucky inheritors may be the last to fully comprehend their plight.

Purely supernatural plots are driven by the antiheroes themselves—dark, evil figures whose passions are no longer human. In fact, they are not human. Yet some part of them always remains so, and therein lies the horror. Vampires, ghosts, and werewolves lead the pack of Gothic monstrosities. In each case, the creature once lived as a normal mortal, though its days were often tainted by sorrow or sin. Because they so closely resemble humans, and represent the dark side of man, they are terrifying in a way that Godzilla could never be.

These superhuman villains are the source of melancholia or brooding evil which pervades most Gothic horror. The monster's existence is rarely satisying. Though Dracula is devoid of virtue, even he has weaknesses. Even he has emotions, and desires that are unattainable. For many, an intense loneliness or unhappiness drives their dark deeds. (This doesn't excuse their actions; it merely explains them.) When Mary Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein confronts his monstrous creation— alone, in an icy wasteland high in the mountains of Switzerland—the monster proclaims:

"I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."

A pure heart might soften to such a lament. To do so would only be human. But therein lies destruction. The fiend has already murdered an innocent child, despite his claims to "no misdeed." Though virtuousness may once have lain in his grasp, it is forever beyond it now. He can never be happy. And therefore he can never be good.

Landscape

Ravenloft, like traditional Gothics, is a world of startlingly beautiful, seductive settings that have at once an allure and a cold, lonely edge. By day, the settings are breathtaking—the windswept heath with brambles aflame in autumn color, soaring peaks with icy summits piercing the sky, mountain streams tumbling thousands of feet into an explosion of glittering spray. The woods are wild, rambling, and dense, with velvet evergreens and gleaming silver aspen, or armies of ancient timber, towering and black. Mountain lakes, too deep to secure anchor, mirror clouds racing across the sky. But as the sun drifts west, and the granite cliffs circling the lakes reflect from the water in shades of gold, and then red, this is no place for travelers to tarry. Yet tarry they will. . . .

When night falls, she cloaks the world in inpenetrable darkness. A chill rises from the soil and contaminates the air. Suddenly, "breathtaking" beauty has new meaning.

Setting

Within these wild, desolate places lie the trappings of the Gothic scene—castle, keep, mansion, or tower. Whatever the structure, it is most often massive and gloomy, with vaulted ceilings, sweeping staircases, and dark, endless hallways. Like the vines whose sinewy arms are slowly strangling the garden outside, the place suggests a sinister animation: in Castle Dracula, the walls are "frowning," the castle "crouched" upon a precipice. In some tales, the house *is* animate, luring victims into its embrace, but never allowing them to leave.

A feeling of age and ruin permeates the setting, even if the servants make efforts to the contrary. Most often the age is visible: dust cloaks the floors, stone walls crumble in decay, iron gates are paralyzed by rust. If at first the grim nature of the setting is not obvious, it soon becomes so, as the protagonist discovers secret passages and underground labyrinths as dark and twisted as the evil dwelling within. It is a place where cosmic forces have entered the earthly realm to feed on the innocence of men.

Few Gothic settings exclude the dungeon and the tower, the chapel or the crypt. These places stretch the envelope of reality toward the extremes of heaven and hell—perhaps to ease the penetration of unearthly powers. Graveyards veiled in mist; tolling bells, tower windows with a single flickering, yellow light; monasteries abandoned save for a few shrouded figures who slip through the passages at night like shadows—these too fit the Gothic tradition.

Enter Poe's "House of Usher" and you will know the consummate Gothic setting:

> I looked upon the the scene before me—upon the mere house . . . upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows . . . and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul. . . . About the whole of the place there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven . . . a pestilant and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible and leaden-hued. . . . Minute fungi spread over the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. . . .
>
> The room in which I found myself was large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. . . . I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. . . .

Actually, he breathed an atmosphere of death. But why quibble over details.

Powers of Nature

Vast landscapes and massive castles may make the ordinary man seem small (or a dwarf miniscule), but it is nothing compared to his helplessness before Nature's awesome forces. The tempest of wind, crash of thunder, flash of lightning—no mortal can match such powers.

Throughout time, men hungering for adventure have tested their mettle against Nature. The explorer at the summit knows he is almost completely at her mercy. She can burn him or freeze him, give him sustenance or let

him starve. But she is impartial, and the adventurer knows that his survival rests solely with himself.

Nature also tests man in Gothic horror. She may erode his strength with driving hail, or chill his blood with icy waters. More often she seeks to erode his will. Ceaseless, cold, misty rains dampen the strongest of spirits. Dark clouds hang in the air like a threat, or gather to signal imminent doom. In most Gothics, Nature does not seem impartial at all; she seems firmly allied with evil. And the victim, therefore, is even more powerless than he imagined.

Sensuality and Seduction

Gothic horror is steeped with sensuality. Villain and victim alike are keenly aware of touch, taste, sound, and smell. Every pore is tuned to danger. Sweat beads at the back of a man's neck until it trickles coldy down his spine. The heart beats in time with the tapping of a talon on the window pane. When a victim feels the fangs of a vampiress pressing into his neck he feels them denting his flesh, even before they pierce the skin. When terror is imminent, sensations warp and intensify. The heart quickens. The low, mournful howling in the copse rises to a feverish pitch. Blood surges, until it courses through the victim's brain with a deafening roar.

Seduction is a common theme, but it's not limited to the most obvious romantic sense. Fragrant orchards entice wanderers to linger, though twilight is nearing. A vampire cannot enter a home until the victim, lulled by his charms, invites him in. Somehow, some way, the victim is drawn toward a situation he ordinarily would—or should—resist.

Dream a Little Dream

Darkness slips into Ravenloft the way a dream creeps into the sleeper's mind. She comes slowly, softly, and there is no halting her approach. As in a dream, the lines between what is real and false begin to blur. And the dreamer is no longer fully in control.

Elements that echo dreams (and nightmares) fill every crevice of Gothic horror. Fog, mist, twilight—all blur the senses to create confusion and uncertainty. Every shadow may be the enemy, every breeze the breath of evil. It matters not if such suspicions are real, because the fear is real. Gothics are a tour of the dark, primitive corners of the mind. As a victim races through the shadowy labyrinth beneath the castle in search of freedom, the real gauntlet takes place in his thoughts—where the horrors are just as real.

Dreams themselves play a prominent role in Gothics. Visions, trances, brain fevers, sleeping spells—all wrench the victim from the relative security of an ordinary world. In sleep, horrors can invade the victim's mind just as they enter the earthly realm—softly, insidiously, as if to say, "Here I am . . . Here I am . . . Open your eyes and see."

Ironically, because dreams and hazy visions can be discounted as "imagination," the victim often disbelieves what he has seen or heard. But perhaps that's precisely what the "evil" is seeking. Because when the victim knows what he faces, yet chooses to disbelieve, he often steps willingly into danger. Too late does he realize his mistake. And for his new master, the victory will be all the more bittersweet.

Suggested Reading

Novels:

Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*
Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*
Wells, H.G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*
Stevenson, Robert Lewis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Dark Tales:

Blackwood, Algernon. Stories.
Byron, George. "Fragment of a Novel" (*Penguin Book of Vampire Stories*)
Le Fanu, J. Sheridan. "Carmilla," "Green Tea"
Lovecraft, H.P. Stories.
Poe, Edgar Allen. Selections, especially "Fall of the House of Usher," The Raven," "The Pit and the Pendulum"
Polidori, John. "The Vampire"
Stoker, Bram. "Dracula's Guest"

Chapter II:
THE DEMIPLANE OF DREAD

Many centuries past, in a world which is now forgotten, the warrior noble Strahd Von Zarovich settled in a land called Barovia, in a castle known as Ravenloft. That castle, and the horrid events which took place there, spawned an entire realm of terror.

As these words are recorded, Castle Ravenloft lies deep within the ethereal plane, in a demiplane of dread and desire. The fortress sits in the center of the realm like a beating heart, pumping evil and sorrow to even the most distant fingers of land. The realm has taken the name of the castle; "Ravenloft" has become synonymous with the entire demiplane. "Castle Ravenloft" now refers to the fortress itself.

The notes below are excerpted from an ancient journal, penned in the hand of Count Strahd Von Zarovich. The daring thieves who obtained this information now walk the demiplane of Ravenloft as mindless undead. Do not let their efforts come to naught. Read this passage and you shall know the origins of the shadowy realm of terror.

The Tome of Strahd

I am The Ancient, I am The Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past. I was the warrior, I was good and just. I thundered across the land like the wrath of a just god, but the war years and the killing years wore down my soul as the wind wears stone into sand.

"All goodness slipped from my life; I found my youth and strength gone and all I had left was death. My army settled in the valley of Barovia and took power of the people in the name of a just god, but with none of a god's grace or justice.

"I called for my family, long unseated from their ancient thrones, and brought them here to settle in the castle Ravenloft. They came with a younger brother of mine, Sergei. He was handsome and youthful. I hated him for both.

"From the families of the valley, one spirit shone above all others. A rare beauty, who was called "perfection," "joy," and "treasure." Her name was Tatyana and I longed for her to be mine.

"I loved her with all my heart. I loved her for her youth. I loved her for her joy. But she spurned me! "Old One" was my name to her—"elder" and "brother" also. Her heart went to Sergei. They were betrothed. The date was set.

"With words she called me "brother," but when I looked into her eyes they reflected another name—"death." It was the death of the aged that she saw in me. She loved her youth and enjoyed it. But I had squandered mine.

"The death she saw in me turned her from me. And so I came to hate death, my death. My hate is very strong; I would not be called "death" so soon.

"I made a pact with death, a pact of blood. On the day of the wedding, I killed Sergei, my brother. My pact was sealed with his blood.

"I found Tatyana weeping in the garden east of the Chapel. She fled from me. She would not let me explain, and a great anger swelled within me. She had to understand the pact I made for her. I pursued her. Finally, in despair, she flung herself from the walls of Ravenloft and I watched everything I ever wanted fall from my grasp forever.

"It was a thousand feet through the mists. No trace of her was ever found. Not even I know her final fate.

"Arrows from the castle guards pierced me to my soul, but I did not die. Nor did I live. I became undead, forever. . . ."

When Strahd made his mysterious pact with "death," the fate of his land and his people was irrevocably changed. He had opened a door. The land, Barovia, was drawn through that door and became part of the Ravenloft demiplane. Strahd became its vampire lord.

No one knows exactly how or why these events occurred. Was it a curse on Barovia or the castle itself? The work of the dark power (or powers) with whom Strahd made his pact? Or was it the rage and sorrow that followed, as Tatyana was lost and Strahd vented his torment by murdering all those within the castle walls? Perhaps it was all of these reasons; perhaps it was none. Many scholars consider it unwise to ponder the question long.

The Growth of a Demiplane

For a while, Barovia was the only land in Ravenloft. The unfortunates who were drawn into the demiplane with Strahd were the only creatures living or dead. The domain was

surrounded by a misty border, which imprisoned them all in the demiplane.

Soon, others stepped out of the mists. Some were good and some were evil, not all of them were men. Azalin, a powerful lich, was one of the first evil powers to enter Strahd's realm. His complete story is recorded in a later chapter of this book.

Eventually, Azalin discovered what many have learned since. The land was alive. It did not breathe, as a creature does, or move, or mate, or eat. But it responded to the life within it. It could grow and change, and would create new earth for those whose evil or desire was strong enough to capture its attention. Azalin stepped into the misty border and began to wander through the vapors like a lost child. In time, new lands spread before him. He became lord of his own domain. Like Strahd, he was imprisoned within it. Other inhabitants could travel across the border from one domain to the next. But he and Strahd would never stand face to face again.

In the ensuing years, other domains have formed. Bit by bit, the demiplane has spread. At this writing, Ravenloft contains more than 30 domains. Each was created for one man, woman, or creature, or for an inseparable pair or trio. Sometimes, like Strahd, a lord is drawn from another world. In other cases, he or she is a native of the demiplane Ravenloft. In every instance, the lord receives tremendous powers from the land, but it is a land in which he or she is condemned to remain forever.

Time Line of Events

The time line below is measured on the Barovian calendar. It was the year 351 when Barovia fully entered the Ravenloft demiplane. Ensuing dates mark important events such as the appearance of other domains.

351 Barovia appears in Ravenloft
470 The gypsy Madame Eva and Strahd forge an agreement
528 Powerful heroes assault Castle Ravenloft and perish
542 Azalin the lich enters Ravenloft
547 Forlorn appears
575 Arak, the drow kingdom, appears
579 The domain Mordent enters Ravenloft
579 Darkon appears
581 Illithid spawn Bluetspur
588 Keening appears
593 Gundarak is formed
603 Invidia takes shape
610 Harkon Lukas the wolfwere enters Ravenloft
613 Kartakass (Lukas' domain) appears
625 Valachan takes shape
682 Nova Vaasa appears
684 Borca appears
689 Vlad Drakov enters Ravenloft
690 Falkovnia appears
691 Tepest appears
694 Richemulot appears
698 Markovia is formed
700 Drakov invades Darkon and is repelled
702 G'Henna appears
704 Drakov invades Darkon and is repelled
707 Dementlieu appears
708 Arkandale appears
711 Drakov invades Darkon and is repelled
714 Hazlan takes shape
715 Dorvinia takes shape
720 Lord Soth enters Ravenloft
Sithicus takes shape
722 Drakov invades Darkon and is repelled
730 Verbrek takes shape
735 This time line is recorded (Campaigns begin)

Defining the Demiplane

The demiplane Ravenloft is not of this world or any other. It exists as an island unto itself. It is a solid, physical dimension within the ethereal plane, and follows its own mystical set of laws.

Ravenloft is not stable. Over time, its lands can expand, condense, coalesce, or disappear. It is usually smaller than realms in the prime material plane, such as Krynn and the Forgotten Realms, but unlike them, Ravenloft has no fixed size. In fact, it appears to move as well as change shape. It floats about the ethereal plane, extending its misty fingers into other worlds, into other planes, to absorb characters as well as land.

For those who visit this realm, time passes with agonizing slowness, especially after sunset. Some who have escaped, after having watched the moon drag across Ravenloft's heavens for a dozen months, claim that each year in Ravenloft

equals nearly two in any other world. They are wearied by the experience, but gain no benefits.

The Ravenloft Mists

In any world, mists and fog can plague travelers, blurring senses, concealing terrors, and leading ships to watery graves. Ravenloft has such ordinary vapors, too. It is also home to the Ravenloft Mists—a force more deadly than any natural phenomenon.

The Mists of Ravenloft appear to be a manifestation of the border ethereal. (The *Manual of Planes* describes that border.) They surround the demiplane at all times, creating the Misty Border. They do not radiate an aura of magic, nor reveal any alignment or sign of life. To all eyes, they appear to be normal fog. But they are anything but "normal." The Mists can reach into the material plane and transport unsuspecting characters into Ravenloft. With time, they can surround an entire portion of land and consume it, too.

No one can command the Mists to perform in this fashion. Where the Mists appear in the prime material plane and who they carry into Ravenloft is beyond the control of anyone living or dead. But when a character has a great enough need or desire, Ravenloft may respond to him. Usually, the Mists are content to transport a few hapless travelers, leaving others behind. In some worlds, sages speak of entire armies that have vanished in a fog, and it is conceivable that the Mists of Ravenloft have swallowed their ranks.

The following example illustrates how an unsuspecting character can be carried into Ravenloft. Mika the Meek, priest of Ilmater in the Forgotten Realms, is returning to Waterdeep after a visit to Dragonspear Castle. A fog rolls in from the sea. Mika is shrouded in a mist he cannot escape. After a time, the fog lifts. Mika walks onward, and finds himself in the demiplane of Ravenloft.

Once the Mists have engulfed any intelligent creature outside of Ravenloft, he must complete the journey to the demiplane. There is no saving throw. Even if the traveler stands still, the Mists eventually lift and he finds himself in Ravenloft. The actual passage between planes is never witnessed. Anyone who is close enough to witness the transport of another character becomes an accidental voyager himself.

In nearly every case, the Mists are indistinguishable from normal fog. Exceptions do exist. For example, if the victims are traveling in the ethereal plane, no mists foretell their fate. One moment they are in the ethereal plane. The next moment they are somewhere in Ravenloft, with a few wisps of vapor snaking round their feet.

These mystical vapors are permanent fixtures in Ravenloft's Misty Border (see the color maps), but they can rise from the soil anywhere in the demiplane, creating a temporary pocket of doom. As a result, a character may be transported from place to place within the demiplane—from fog bank to fog bank—and be powerless to stop it. This also means a character who enters the demiplane from another realm may find himself deposited anywhere in Ravenloft, stranded by the vapors which dissipate around him.

Characters in Ravenloft who willingly step into the Misty Border can wander within it. They walk in a bewildering, foggy dreamworld, where time and space seem twisted and tangled. If their desire to remain in this limbo is strong enough, they can remain. When their will to stay in the

border falters, they find themselves in one of Ravenloft's domains within an hour. No one can predict or control where a wanderer emerges—that is determined by the forces of Ravenloft.

The Misty Border is not completely void of life. Small, temporary domains sometimes form within it (see below). The Border is also home to many wandering monsters. Just as a character can choose to stay in the Mists, so can a creature, particularly one without the brains or personality to establish a domain. These creatures lurk within the Misty Border, hoping to encounter travelers. Given such encounters, few travelers choose to remain in the Misty Border for long.

Permanent Gates

The Mists are the most common means of entering Ravenloft. According to legend, a few permanent gates or portals also lead to the demiplane. Most portals exist in the prime material plane, where they are rare and well hidden. Some open or exist only at certain times or when certain circumstances are true. Most appear to lead into the Misty Border. All are one-way gates. Each permanent gate provides an entrance to Ravenloft, but none provides an escape.

Below are some of the known gates to Ravenloft. Presumably, there are others, which are yet to be discovered or reported.

- The world of Krynn is rumored to have two gates to Ravenloft. (Krynn is described in DRAGONLANCE™ products.) On the continent of Taladas, where the Steamwall Mountains meet Blackwater Glade, lies a cave. Inside this cave is a portal. It is a mist-filled doorway, magical and glowing. Krynn's second portal lies on the continent Ansalon, somewhere in the wilderness near Xak Tsaroth. Any details of this portal's operation or precise location have been lost over the years.
- In the Forgotten Realms, there is a gate in the Greycloak hills, on the western edge of the Anauroch desert. According to rumor, a pit somewhere in these hills leads to Ravenloft.
- In the eastern realms of Kara-Tur is a small, nameless island. It lies east of the main continent and south of Wa. On the morn following a new moon, a mist rolls in from the sea and gently laps at the island's shore. Anyone standing in the surf is transported to Ravenloft.
- On Oerth, where the City of Greyhawk stands, there is a gate just below a summit in the Lortmil mountains. A small alcove in the rock contains a misty opening. The opening leads to Ravenloft. Another portal is rumored to lie somewhere within the Ruins of Greyhawk.

Conjunctions

Once in a great while, the lands of Ravenloft replace large portions of land in other realms. This is called a conjunction. It may be the one time that creatures who are native to Ravenloft can leave their shadowy realm. Even lords, such as Strahd, may be able to escape the bonds of their domains. As of this writing, no lord has taken this step, though the reasons are not fully understood.

The Mists may not be visible or active when a piece of Ravenloft joins another realm. For example, where Oerth once had only wild, desolate moor, there might now stand a castle on a cliff, with a village below it. Any character could walk between the moor, the castle, and the village without hindrance.

Throughout time, only a few conjunctions have been reported, and some of those are suspected to be unrelated phenomena. So few have occurred that it is meaningless to speculate how long any future conjunction might last, or where it will appear. All that is known is that they do end in time, disappearing completely.

Many of Ravenloft's powerful lords hope to learn the secrets of the conjunctions. They seek to cause another conjunction to occur, either to escape their domains or to extend their sway beyond the shadowy realm in which they reside. None has succeeded in this quest.

The Domains of Ravenloft

Ravenloft currently contains over 30 domains, each the personal prison and realm of power of a lord. (A later chapter in this book describes each domain in full detail.) The domains are like small countries with distinct political borders. Each domain reflects the personality of the lord who prompted its creation. The domains are solid and real, and most appear no different from the material plane. Natives and visitors to this demiplane can

travel across the borders between domains. The lords cannot.

Twenty-six of the domains comprise one solid landmass known as the Core. Barovia, Strahd's domain, lies at the heart of this "continent of discontent." Strahd is not the most powerful lord in the demiplane, only the first.

Eight domains are "islands of terror," floating independently in the misty seas of the Ravenloft demiplane. Each is permanently surrounded by the Mists. Their origin may be as varied as the islands in other worlds, calving from the Core like icebergs, or erupting like fountains of lava, which later cool and solidify. Because Ravenloft is ever-changing, these islands may eventually drift together to become one, or simply may sink back into the Mists and vanish.

The lord of each domain is evil, but many people are kind and good at heart. Unfortunately, most are too guarded or afraid to show this side to a stranger. Others are too ignorant or numb to combat the evil around them. Yet in the midst of this darkness, small bastions of goodness take hold. To survive, they must stay in the shadows and choose their actions carefully.

Forming New Lands

An evil character or creature who has great power or emotion may prompt the formation of a new domain. If he makes his home near the Misty Border, the demiplane may respond to his presence. The Mists recede, and the land around him takes on a form and solid substance that reflect his basic nature. Whole cities may appear, ancient and crumbling, as if they had existed for thousands of years. The creature has no control over this process. It happens whether he desires it or not.

The land and the lord are tightly linked, and as a result, the lord's powers may be greater than they were before. He also may be cursed. Each domain reflects the personality and past offenses of its lord. It constantly reminds him of everything he was and is. He cannot escape those reminders, because every domain imprisons its lord.

For example, Strahd is imprisoned in Barovia. He is aware of many things that occur within its borders, and can sense the entrance of new visitors. He holds sway over many animals and objects in his domain. He is a vampire lord, becoming stronger with age, forever undead. All these powers come from the land itself. But with these powers comes pain. Every few generations, a woman is born in Barovia who resembles Strahd's lost love, Tatyana. That woman is her reincarnation. He can pursue her, but can never hold her. The land ensures his eternal torment.

Small minds tend to create small lands. A particularly vicious little creature may spawn a tiny, isolated domain, which can be reached only by those who wander in the Misty Border. Such domains have limited endurance, and tend to dissolve on their own. They usually encompass only a manor or keep, perhaps with a small patch of land. Although the owner may not wield as much power as other lords, he controls his little prison nonetheless. Even from such tenuous domains, escape can be treacherous.

Powerful good or neutral creatures do not seem to trigger the creation of a domain. Every lord in Ravenloft is evil. Force of personality seems to be more important than raw physical power. A normal man of great hatred and greed can hold a large domain, while a weak-willed vampire may wander without one.

As a DM designing adventures in Ravenloft, you may choose to create a new domain for your players. Remember that permanent new domains are quite rare, especially within the Core. Only a powerful character with great emotion or strength of will can arouse the land and make it grow. Lords are passionate creatures driven by remorse, a lust for power, or an insatiable need for vengeance. As noted above, they may gain powers from the land, but they also suffer its curse. Chapter XIII in this book provides examples of the powers and pains each lord endures.

War and Destruction

The demiplane makes it difficult to destroy a lord, but it is not impossible. When a lord is destroyed, the domain is in flux. If another powerful force resides in the domain, he or she may simply assume control. Usually this force must have been in residence for some time, attracting the demiplane's attention. In this way the domains have remained in the control of entire families, passed down through the generations. If no personality assumes control of a domain, the land may slowly dissolve into the

Misty Border. Or it may warp to become part of a neighboring domain, enlarging the prison of another lord.

Once a domain is established, it cannot be altered or removed unless something destroys or defeats the lord in power. If a lowly little creature of evil establishes a tiny prison, the most powerful vampiress in Ravenloft is subject to its rules while inside its borders. Of course, the vampiress might be able to kill or radically alter the little lord. If the demiplane responds to the vampiress, and makes *her* a lord, the domain may be altered to suit her condition. In many cases, a new domain simply would replace the one she has destroyed.

War is rare but not unknown in Ravenloft. Although lords cannot leave their domains, their minions are under no such restriction. A lord might choose to wage war to gain indirect control over greater territory, or just to cause trouble and misery. These wars meet with little success. A lord has great power, not only over his land but often over its creatures and those that enter it. An invading army quickly can become soldiers for the domain they intended to assault.

Powerful, evil forces who are not lords are most likely to wage war in Ravenloft. This type of war usually is fought with stealth and intrigue rather than military might. Such a rogue power could kill a reigning lord and take over his lands. The lands would respond to the new personality. They probably would change in nature and perhaps even in size, although they would not consume the territory of other domains.

Leaving Ravenloft

Ravenloft is difficult to escape. A few portals exist in the demiplane, which allow travelers to reenter the prime material plane. They are as uncommon as the one-way gates that lead into Ravenloft. Some magical items also can transport creatures out of the demiplane. In rare cases, a greater power may remove creatures or characters from the demiplane of dread, and guide them to a safer world.

The portals in Ravenloft are shining, hollow shapes—a circle, rectangle, or amorphous blob, for example. Many open only once, then vanish forever. Even permanent portals never stay open indefinitely. Every portal must be triggered by some event (see below). When triggered, they remain open for 2d6 rounds. During that time, they can transport anyone who steps through the portal to the prime material plane. The exact destination may be uncertain, but travelers who find these gateways rarely care.

The table below lists triggers that commonly open one of Ravenloft's exits.

Common Portal Triggers

1	Particular calendar date
2	Phase of the moon
3	Alignment of the stars
4	A gift of blood
5	Destruction of a particular creature
6	Destruction of a particular magical item
7	Lifting of a curse
8	Willed by a domain lord
9	Performance of a ritual
10	DM's choice

Other, more complicated triggers also may open a portal. Examples include historical events. For instance, a portal may open "when the Tower of Talus falls," "when the Muldar twins are reunited," or "when a daughter of Thanic walks the rainbow." Other complex triggers combine several simple events. For example, a portal designed with the table above may open only when a character destroys a particular creature during a half moon.

When you are designing adventures, the trigger for a portal should fit your story. Escaping from Ravenloft is a major part of some adventures, so the opening of a portal should be somewhat complex and interesting. A standard ploy is to design two portals for an adventure. The characters open the first by accident or coincidence, and watch in horror as the gateway closes before they can use it. Then they must find the second means of escape.

Chapter III: THE RESHAPING OF CHARACTERS

Characters of any class, race, and alignment can enter Ravenloft. The gates leading in are open to all. The land isn't blind to such individual traits—quite the contrary. The mists, when wrapped round a group of wayfaring adventurers, seem to sense the very essence of each new guest. When that essence is displeasing, the land reshapes it, muting an offending ability here, redefining a power there. For most characters, the effects are slight and temporary, lasting only as long as the character stays in Ravenloft. For others, the changes are dramatic. These characters, too tempting for the land to ignore, may find themselves trapped in Ravenloft forever.

This chapter explains how the darken lands affect characters of a given class, race, or alignment.

Warriors

Ravenloft's "unnatural" laws leave most warriors virtually untouched. The fighter suffers no changes at all to his abilities or personality. Rangers and paladins, however, do not escape the realm's forces so easily.

Paladins

By nature, paladins can detect evil within 60 feet if they focus their thoughts on a given direction. The moment these proverbial "white knights" enter the Mists, that ability changes. In Ravenloft, no one can detect evil magically—either by spellcasting or by natural ability. Like any character who attempts to detect evil, paladins perceive no hint of evil, good, or neutrality. Instead, they learn whether the target is "chaotic" or "not chaotic." Furthermore, the target can make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid detection altogether.

The paladin's natural immunity to disease does not protect him from *magical* diseases. Lycanthropy, mummy's touch, any affliction caused by a spell—all these are magical. Likewise, his ability to cure disease applies only to an illness with natural causes. The paladin's usual +2 bonus to saving throws does apply to his saves vs. magical disease.

An aura that protects paladins from evil surrounds them at all times. The aura has a 10-foot radius. This natural gift does not match the spell, *protection from evil*. The aura inflicts only a −1 penalty to the attack rolls of evil creatures within its influence. Evil creatures can sense the aura and its exact source without entering it. All other things being equal, they will choose to attack someone other than the paladin in combat. If the paladin is the logical target, however, intelligent creatures won't hesitate to attack him.

Paladins are like salt in a gaping wound; they're impossible to ignore. The instant one of these do-gooders steps into a domain, the lord of that domain can sense it. The paladin's glaring aura disturbs the fabric of the land itself. The lord always knows the general position of every paladin in his or her domain. (As a rule of thumb, you can assume the lord comes within a mile of guessing the paladin's exact position.) If a paladin has drawn a holy sword, the lord's chance of locating him improves. (In general, the lord can guess the location of the sword-toting paladin within 100 yards.)

Besides clerics, paladins are the only characters who can turn undead. Both classes will discover that this ability changes in Ravenloft. See "Clerics" below for details.

Rangers

Rangers enjoy a natural empathy with animals, and are gifted handlers. This ability works as stated in the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* and *DMG*—unless it conflicts with the laws of the domain. (The laws of any domain always take precedence over an individual PC's powers.) In some domains, animals are not trainable. In others, some or all of the animals obey only the lord. For example, all wolves in Barovia obey Strahd. In this case, the ranger cannot influence the wolves. Of course, the ranger won't know this until he tests his skill. And Strahd, who enjoys deception, may let it appear that the ranger has controlled a wolf, just to surprise the character later.

If the ranger has animals or enchanted creatures as followers, they may not stay with him. These creatures become subject to the laws of the domain in which they travel. For example, if a faithful wolf accompanies a ranger into Barovia, the wolf becomes Strahd's servant.

Unless the rules state otherwise, however, the animal won't lose all memory of its loyalty to the ranger. It won't attack the ranger or his friends. Instead, the animal is likely to flee to resolve the conflicting instructions. Such an animal never strays far from the group. Both drawn to and repelled from his former master, the creature nervously shadows the group's every move. This can provide a wonderful diversion. The adventurers, already on edge, hear rustling in the nearby brush at night. Is it a monster preparing to attack, or just the ranger's errant animal follower?

Occasionally a ranger's animal follower does become pitted directly against him. Such an enchanted creature might harass villagers or torment other NPCs. Evil powers may command the creature to attack the ranger's group directly. If the powers are intense, the animal will have no choice but to obey.

When the ranger leaves the domain, his animal follower will attempt to accompany him—that is, if the animal still lives, and has not received orders directly to the contrary. Once outside the domain, the creature reverts to its normal behavior. Recalling its disloyal actions, an intelligent creature may suffer pangs of guilt that leave it temporarily depressed or exceptionally submissive.

Wizards

A wizard's familiar does not automatically submit to the will of Ravenloft's lords. Unlike the ranger's followers, a familiar summoned or conjured by a mage is virtually part of the mage himself. The two are empathetically and physically linked. This deeper connection helps protect the familiar from control by an outside force.

For the most part, Ravenloft appears to ignore a mage and his powers until he attempts to use them. Several spells and magic items have surprising new results. See the chapters devoted to magic for specifics. Wizards suffer no other ill effects when adventuring in Ravenloft—none to which they alone are vulnerable, that is.

Priests

Turning undead is a priest's most prized ability. It also is one of the most offensive to Ravenloft's dark powers. As a result, undead are more difficult to turn in Ravenloft than in other worlds. For example, a 5 HD monster in Ravenloft is as tough to turn as a 6 HD monster elsewhere. No attempt is automatically successful. Use the table below to resolve a turning attempt in Ravenloft. Rules for turning undead are the same as described in the *Players' Handbook*.

TURNING UNDEAD

Type or Level of Undead	Level of the Priest											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-11	12-13	14+
Skeleton or 1HD	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
Zombie	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
Ghoul or 2 HD	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*
Shadow or 3-4HD	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*
Wight or 5 HD	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*
Ghast	—		20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*
Wraith or 6 HD	—		—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1
Mummy or 7 HD	—		—		20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1
Spectre or 8 HD	—		—		—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4
Vampire or 9 HD	—		—		—		20	19	16	13	10	7
Ghost or 10 HD	—		—		—		—	20	19	16	13	10
Lich or 11+ HD	—		—		—		—		20	19	16	13
Special	—		—		—		—		—	20	19	16

* The undead creature is destroyed if it cannot flee at its current maximum rate or escape the priest's line of sight.

As the evil surrounding the undead increases, the priest's ability to turn them wanes. Ravenloft's lands are riddled with sinkholes of evil. So foul are these places that priests suffer penalties from −1 to −4 when turning undead. Even in a relatively calm area, the presence of an evil master reduces the priest's effectiveness. In most domains, when the lord is standing within 300 feet of his undead minions, priests suffer a −2 penalty in attempts to turn them. Pity the poor priest who tries his powers where both the lord and land act against him; the modifiers are cumulative.

Even without such penalties, Ravenloft's undead are often tougher to turn than their hit dice would indicate. For example, Strahd's zombies are unusually fierce, befitting such a powerful master. Some monsters may become unturnable by the priest. For example, if a 5th level priest attempts to turn a mummy, he needs a 20. An extra −2 modifier for a haunted house (one of those "sinkholes of evil") would make it impossible for the priest to turn a wraith or a ghast, too.

Priests fit one of two general descriptions: those who worship a pantheon of gods but no god in particular, and those devoted to a specific deity. Druids belong to the second group; they worship a deity of the forest or nature. No matter which group they belong to, priests obtain spells through prayer. A deity answers those prayers and grants the spells. Unfortunately, in Ravenloft the lines of communication between priests and deities are somewhat flawed. The results of any spell may be altered. Check the chapter on magic for specifics.

Priests devoted to a specific deity usually enjoy special abilities. If the ability mimics a spell that works differently in Ravenloft, the ability works differently, too. (Follow the revised spell description.) Otherwise the DM must determine in advance what—if any—ill effects the priest may suffer. Keep in mind that the laws of Ravenloft and its domains take precedence over the abilities of any player character.

Optional Rule: Like paladins, powerful lawful-good priests may trigger a kind of "alarm" that tells the lord of a domain their approximate location. In the paladin's case, his extreme alignment alerts the lord. As DM, you might decide that a priest devoted to a strongly lawful-good deity would stand out for the same reason.

Rogues

The laws of Ravenloft leave rogues virtually untouched. Thieves suffer no alterations at all; their abilities remain as described in AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. Bards suffer one minor restriction: They do not know "a little bit about everything" in Ravenloft. Unless they have lived and traveled through this hellish realm for more than a year, they have no reason to understand its people, places, or things. Of course, any spells a bard can cast are subject to the changes noted in this book.

Nonhuman Races

The majority of Ravenloft's inhabitants are human—at least, they look human. Dwarves, halflings, and other nonhuman PC races are rare. Even the lords tend to look more-or-less like Homo sapiens. Of course, exceptions occur, and adventurers will inevitably stumble across a domain or two whose natives are not human.

Nonhuman characters usually attract attention. In an extreme case, they may spur a lynch mob into action. The AD&D® game Encounter Table lists a progression of reactions, from "flight" or "friendly" to "hostile." (See Table 59 in the DMG.) When using the Encounter Table, lower the reaction one category to reflect a nonhuman's negative influence. (For example, "cautious" becomes "threatening.") That means a reaction roll will never call for a friendly result when a nonhuman is present.

Friendly reactions won't always elude these "alien" races, however. A nonhuman who makes exceptional efforts to prove his loyalty and harmlessness eventually may win the trust of Ravenloft natives. Once that trust is established, NPCs may allow themselves to act friendly.

A nonhuman who tries to impress NPCs with his tremendous powers may find those efforts backfiring. If he reveals his great prowess, the base chance that NPCs will react in fear is 50%. As DM, you may apply modifiers as you see fit. For example, if an elven mage casts a *fireball* at an abandoned house, the modifier would be severe. Most NPCs would fear him, and logically assume that no home—not even their own—is safe from such destruction.

If you base NPC reactions on a character's Charisma, consider a nonhuman to be 3 points lower than a human. If a domain's description indicates no ill feelings toward nonhumans, ignore this adjustment. Remember that such rules apply only to initial reactions. Roleplaying will determine how NPCs react in the long run.

A simple disguise can prevent most of this trouble. Ravenloft's inhabitants rarely see nonhumans. They don't expect to, and more importantly, they don't want to. So unless they're given a good reason to assume otherwise, they

prefer to believe a person is human. But Ravenloft's inhabitants also are suspicious. The moment a nonhuman starts to shake their false perception of him, all bets are off.

Elves: Elven characters normally enjoy a 90% resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells. Against one of Ravenloft's powerful natives, that resistance falters. The actual reduction depends on the spellcaster's skill, as well as the strength of his ties to the darken land. A typical lord reduces an elf's resistance to just 50%.

Good and Evil

In many ways, the land of Ravenloft acts like a sentient—perhaps even living—organism. Characters with an exceptionally strong will and alignment attract the land's attention. Most player characters travel through Ravenloft virtually unnoticed. Only a character with the convictions of a paladin would warrant its attention. When it does notice a character, goodness inflames it. Evil, on the other hand, is the substance on which it quietly feeds.

Ironically, evil PCs face the greatest danger in Ravenloft. As DM, you must observe each PC carefully. If his actions are completely and consistently evil, his personality void of redeeming features, then the land will respond. The section below explains how.

The Powers Check

Ravenloft responds to evil. It even appears to nurture it, because when that evil is strong, the land can trap it forever. This could happen to a player character. The AD&D® game is designed for heroes, but despite the best intentions of the DM and all guidelines to the contrary, some people insist on playing the opposite. These players, if not careful, may find their characters gradually wrested from their control.

A PC who intentionally commits an evil act (or willingly sides with evil forces) may trigger a powers check. (A few NPCs may also be subject to this check, at the DM's discretion.) In loose terms, a successful check means that Ravenloft's powers notice the character, and decide to nudge him toward their "welcoming arms." To trigger a powers check, the character must intend to do something truly evil. And he must succeed. Accidents with dark or deadly results don't count.

Normally, actions committed for the PC's own well-being and safety do not involve evil intent. For example, Heinrich the PC is trapped in a village jail, awaiting torture or worse. Heinrich tries to escape. While doing so, it appears that he may have to kill one of the jailors to succeed, so he does. That's not admirable. And it may even cost the character a few experience points for "story." But it's too gray to excite the powers of Ravenloft. However, if Heinrich deliberately tortures the jailor—even for information—that's intentionally dark. The DM might decide that a Ravenloft powers check is necessary.

The normal Ravenloft powers check is a percentile roll. If the result is 100, the demiplane's strange powers automatically respond. As DM, you can increase the chance, depending upon the act. If the act is utterly and completely evil, then the chance the dark powers will respond is at least 5%. The powers check is designed to help you, the DM, warn players they are treading a thin line as role-players. Assign the chances you think are necessary. In general, however, the chance should not exceed 10% for PCs.

If the dark powers of Ravenloft act, the response varies in intensity, from Stage One (the weakest) to Stage Six. Each stage is explained fully below. With each continuing offense, the response rises one level. Stage Six is the most drastic: the land grants the character a domain and makes him its lord. If this happens to a PC, his adventuring days are over. The player must give his character to the DM. The character becomes an NPC—a thoroughly evil and vicious opponent with which all the players must now contend.

Each response is a double-edged sword, involving both reward and punishment. Rewards apply only when the character is in Ravenloft. Punishments, on the other hand, follow the character even after he leaves this realm, though they may diminish with time and good deeds.

In general, responses occur one stage at a time. However, if the character's actions are incredibly heinous or horrid, the powers may grant two responses instead of one (Stages Two *and* Three, for example). The results are cumulative. A character who reaches Stage Six still retains the mark of every preceding response.

Stage One, The Enticement

Rewards: To entice the character into their grasp, the dark powers reward the character in a small way. The following list includes possible rewards. An asterisk means the reward can qualify as a punishment, too.

+2 hit points permanently
+1 on a single ability (18 max. score)
Moves at 15 if on all fours *
Jumps x2 in height and distance
Fouls food and water by touch once a day at will *
Sees clearly in normal darkness
+1 save vs. fear
+1 save vs. disease
+1 save vs. paralyzation
Doesn't need to eat or drink, and can't do so without retching
Speaks with a particular type of animal
Ventriloquism once a day
Small Claws, 1-2 points damage *
Small fangs, 1-2 points damage *

Punishments: At the same time the character is rewarded, his evil nature becomes more visible. His Charisma drops temporarily whenever anyone notices this change. Here are a few

possible Stage One punishments:
- Evil odor 10' radius—animal musk, sulphur, decay, smoke, etc.
- Red or yellow eyes
- Eyes glow in the dark like a cat's
- Laughs like hyena when tense or excited
- Voice sounds evil, low, whispery
- Sharply pointed eyebrows and ears
- Perpetually twitchy and nervous
- Always pants and breathes heavily
- Bays at the first sight of the moon
- Always eats meat raw, at least once a day
- Must eat bones once a day
- Always shredding something—cloth, paper, leaves, etc.
- Character's smile is seen as cruel and evil
- Open sores on hands and arms
- Growls when tense or excited
- Forked tongue
- Pupils like a cat's (vertical slits)
- Hair is snow-white and tangled
- Six fingers on each hand
- Hands turn coal black
- One side of face sags
- Colorblind

Stage Two, The Invitation

Rewards: A partial list follows. If the reward is a minor magical item, the item tends to be vile and evil. Ravenloft's powers never reward dark deeds with something good, but a neutral reward is possible. Rewards marked with an asterisk may count as punishments, too (DM's option).
- Minor magical item
- +4 hit points permanently
- +2 on a single ability (18 max. score)
- Move x2 on all fours *
- Touch always fouls food and water *
- Cause disease once a day *
- Claws 1-4 points damage *
- Fangs 1-4 points damage *
- Breathe stinking cloud 10' radius, once a day
- +2 save vs. fire or cold
- Poison spittle, becomes inert after 1 turn
- Detect invisibility once a day
- Detect magic once a day
- Speak with undead once a day
- Affect normal fires once a day
- Burning hands once a day
- Charm person once a day
- Chill touch once a day
- Feather fall once a day
- Hypnotism once a day
- Shocking grasp once a day
- Spider climb once a day

Punishments: These involve a major change in physical appearance—one that cannot escape notice. The character may suffer one or more of the following:
- Neck grows 1 foot longer
- Animal fur or scales cover body, frame face
- Grows 3-foot long tail
- Feet become paws or the feet of a bird, reptile, etc.
- Face of a particular animal
- Fingers on left hand become tentacles
- Eyes melt away, leaving sockets, but character still sees normally
- Small horns grow on head, 1-2 points damage
- Hunchback, combat ability unaffected
- Vestigial, leathery wings
- Must drink blood once a day
- Must hurt something once a day
- Voice sounds completely inhuman
- Blinded in normal daylight
- Must eat stones and dirt once a day

Stage Three, The Touch of Darkness

Rewards: The character receives a minor power—usually a spell that becomes a natural ability. Examples include:
- Gain 1 level of experience
- Breath can create darkness 10' radius 3 times a day
- Ray of enfeeblement from eyes 3 times a day
- Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter by touch 3 times a day
- Drinking blood increases Strength 1d4+2 for 10 rounds
- Acquires evil monster of 2 hit die or less as companion
- Warp Wood by touch 3 times a day

Punishments: A minor physical change accompanies the reward. For example, a character who suddenly can warp wood may do so with dark brown hands and black, curving

nails. A character who drinks blood may have fangs and red eyes while his Strength is increased. And someone who acquires a monstrous companion may begin to resemble that creature a bit. (Don't masters and pets often look alike?)

The character also gains a vicious temper, with little ability to control it. Whenever someone thwarts the character in even the slightest goal, he must make a saving throw vs. spells. If he fails, he vents his anger on the weakest person in range for one round. The character either attacks or plays a vicious prank. For example, a barmaid tells Berthold, an entrepreneur of evil, that she cannot serve him another drink. She has thwarted his desires. He fails his save. Before Berthold can stop himself, he stands up and slaps her in a fit of rage. Of course, her friends are none too pleased.

Stage Four, The Embrace

Rewards: The character receives a new power or ability—either a resistance to magic, or an ability that mimics a spell.

+4 bonus on all mind control attacks
Spin webs from hands
Raise dead by touch once a day
Poison food and water by touch
Invisibility 3 times a day
Fly at will
Magic jar by gaze once a day
Drain a level by touch
Shape-change to a single form at will
Control undead at will
Need silver or magical weapon to hit
Cause fear 3 times a day
Immune to fire, or immune to cold

Punishments: The character's physical appearance changes to reflect the new ability. For example, a character who can spin webs may have hands that resemble two spiders dangling from his wrists.

In addition, the character begins to lose control over his actions for longer stretches of time. When faced with an item of power or beauty, the character must make a saving throw vs. spells to resist stealing it. (The desire to win a charismatic person's devotion may be equally compelling.) When the throw fails, the character loses self-control for 2d6 rounds. If he's a PC, the DM runs him temporarily. During that time, the character is obsessed with fulfilling his desires. He does anything and everything in his power to get what he wants. If he is thwarted, he must make a save vs. spells or strike out at whomever is nearest and least able to defend themselves.

Stage Five, Creature of Ravenloft

With each prior response, Ravenloft has granted the character more of what he seems to desire—namely, power. Ravenloft also has changed his outer appearance, so that it reflects his inner darkness. At Stage Five, Ravenloft's mysterious powers complete the next logical step: the character becomes a creature of Ravenloft. He may be a new "personality," but in most cases he is not even human. He loses control over his actions for days and perhaps weeks at a time. He may suffer permanent physical changes (like a vampire) or only change at certain times (like a were-creature). If his body stays the same, his mind splits into two personalities—one of them black as pitch. When the darker side takes over, it remains in charge for 2d6 days. The DM always runs a character's "dark side."

Stage Six, Lord of a Domain

At this stage, a character has established that he belongs in Ravenloft forever. The next time the character steps into the Mists, the land reacts and creates a tiny domain for him, no more than two miles across. (Most often, it's simply a dwelling and a yard.) At the DM's option, the new domain can be attached to another domain, or float separately.

No player character can be a lord. He becomes an NPC controlled by the DM. Like all other lords in Ravenloft, the character can never leave his domain. He wields great power in his own, small realm. But he also suffers a dangerous curse, given by the powers of Ravenloft. (See Chapter VI, "Curses" for more detail.) As DM, you must tailor the new lord's curse and powers as you see fit. Use the lords of other domains as examples of what can be done.

Chapter IV: FEAR AND HORROR CHECKS

Sitting around a gaming table, rolling dice and eating snacks, a player may easily say, "I wade through the pool of writhing zombie arms." It would be quite another story to actually do it. The following rules help intrepid, pretzel-eating players determine how their characters realistically would react to horrors.

Fear vs. Horror

When characters face things no normal man would ever want to face, two reaction checks come into play: fear and horror checks. On the surface, the emotions seem similar. In both cases, the mind becomes just a little unhinged, and panic is not unlikely. In Ravenloft game terms, however, fear and horror indicate two distinct reactions.

Fear is the response to an immediate physical threat— usually a creature. The character faces some malignant force that clearly can harm him and probably will harm him *now*.

Horror, on the other hand, implies a certain amount of revulsion, anguish, and repugnance. Sometimes, it comes from the realization of some horrid truth or possibility. Usually, it arises from a scene. The character sees something completely contrary to what he believes *should* be in the world (even if experience has taught him otherwise). For example, let's say a lad spies a maiden beside a pool in the woods, and watches her remove a few articles of clothing as she prepares for a swim. Next, he watches her remove her head. He faces no immediate threat, but he still may be horrified.

Fear Checks

When to Make a Fear Check: A character must make a fear check when he faces someone (or something) who threatens him with overwhelming power or strength. The victim must know, suspect, or believe that he is overmatched. The danger must be imminent. And the threat must be active. (A bottomless pit is deadly, but it usually doesn't call for a fear check.)

As a general rule, any of the following constitutes "overwhelming power or strength":

1. The hit dice of the "threat" are more than double the total hit dice of the entire party (the adventurers actually confronting the threat).

2. The maximum damage the creature(s) can inflict is enough to kill the hardiest character in the group in just one round. (In this case, "hardiest" means the character with the most hit points.)

3. Adventurers who can't cast spells do not have weapons of sufficient magical strength to harm the creature(s).

Of course, a character may only guess that one of these three conditions is true. If the characters don't even suspect they're overmatched, the DM must decide whether a fear check is appropriate. What the characters believe is more important than what they know. If characters don't perceive a threat, they don't have to make a fear check, even if that threat is real. Likewise, a powerful illusion may trigger a fear check, even though the threat is false. In these cases, size and appearance of the monster are more important than its actual powers.

Use fear checks sparingly. PCs are supposedly hardened adventurers. They should be able to face tough monsters without checking for fear, provided they believe they have a reasonable chance of surviving. When players think virtually all hope of survival is lost, *then* call for fear checks. That doesn't mean the players are right— just that they feel this way.

Any item or spell that doesn't allow a creature (or threat) to harm a PC negates the need for a fear check. *Oil* and *armor of etherealness* are good examples. (See the chapter on magical items for revised descriptions of these items.) An *emotion* spell, cast *before* an encounter to instill courage, will negate the fear check and grant the character the attack bonuses described for that spell.

How to Make a Fear Check: A fear check is a saving throw vs. paralyzation. This save applies because fear is an assault on the victim's mind, and it requires exceptional force of will to resist it. The "magical defense adjustment" for Wisdom automatically applies, accounting for

the character's mental fortitude. The assault is not magical, however; natural resistance to magic has no effect on emotional fear.

Spells and magical items *can* protect characters from fear, however, by giving them confidence in their ability to survive. Magic that offers partial protection, or protection that is not guaranteed, adds a +4 bonus to the character's saving throw. For example, *protection from evil, 10-foot radius* is not guaranteed, because the creature gets a saving throw of his own to negate the spell. Regardless of that creature's saving throw results, the character must still roll a fear check, but gets the +4 bonus. A character wearing a *ring of fire resistance* when facing a fire-breathing hell hound also would gain a +4 bonus to his fear roll. When an *emotion* spell is used to inspire hope, the character receives the +2 die-roll bonus described for that spell, along with the +4 bonus.

The table below lists common modifiers for fear checks. As DM, you're encouraged to apply others as you see fit; some things are scarier than others. Any other modifier that normally affects a save vs. paralyzation also affects a fear check.

Table of Fear Modifiers

Spell specifically helpful against encounter	+4
Magical item specifically helpful against encounter	+4
Friend or family endangered	+4
Facing threat again on the same day	+1
Know how a similar encounter was defeated	+2
Defeated previously by a similar encounter	−2

Failing a Fear Check: When a character fails a fear check, he's likely to drop whatever he's holding. (The same thing occurs when a *fear* spell affects him.) The base chance of this is 60% at first level (or at 1 hit die). Each level above the 1st reduces the probability by 5%. Thus, at 10th level, the character has only a 15% chance of dropping items. The minimum chance is 10%.

Whether or not he drops something, a character who fails a fear check is "fearstruck." The survival instinct takes over, and he has no choice but to RUN AWAY! He'll go anywhere, as long as it puts some distance between him and the threat. If the threatening creature (or creatures) wins initiative, it receives 1 round of free attacks from behind. After that, it can continue to attack from behind if it can keep pace with its fearstruck victim. (Remember, a monster must have double its victim's movement rate to follow *and* attack in this instance.) To avoid a cartoon scene, a kind DM may permit continually clobbered characters to run toward a dead end. Once cornered, even fearstruck characters can fight.

When a character cannot flee, he can turn and confront the threat. It takes him one round just to gather his wits. After that, the fearstruck character can fight with a −2 penalty to all die rolls, including his "to hit" and damage. His armor class also is decreased by 2, because his defensive skill is diminished. Fearstruck wizards and priests have shaky hands; spells have a 25% base chance, minus the spellcaster's level, of misfiring.

Recovering from Fear: Once the source of fear is removed or no longer poses a threat, the fearstruck character regains his normal composure in 1d4 rounds. A priest or wizard also may alleviate fear with appropriate magic. Examples include *remove fear*, *forget*, and *emotion* spells. If the character still faces the threat, the *forget* spell allows a new fear check. Courage instilled by the *emotion* spell merely cancels the fear check results; it does not provide attack bonuses unless the wizard casts it again after relieving the fear.

Horror Checks

As explained above, horror is a broader emotion than fear alone, involving revulsion, anguish, or repugnance as well as a sense of terror. A character may not have to make a fear check when he sees a formidable creature— especially if he has faced that kind (or what he thinks is its kind) a hundred times before. But when he sees the horrid effects that creature has inflicted on his friends, and suddenly realizes his own vulnerability, that's cause for a horror check.

Culture and upbringing may determine which scenes can horrify a character. For example, a mortician may not feel the same squeamishness over a dead body that other characters would.

And a druid may be more sensitive to animal slaughter than a cattle rancher. Most inexperienced characters would be horrified by the mere sight of an undead creature. On the other hand, if a character has repeatedly witnessed the same horrifying event, he eventually may become numb to its effects.

No hard, fast rules exist for determining horror (or fear). The DM must decide which situations are threatening or awful enough to call for this reaction check. As DM, you should be careful to separate the players' intrepid response from those a character would normally feel. A 20th-century, popcorn-munching player can easily look a DM in the eye and say, "So what's so bad about that?" Don't let player reactions sway you. Put yourself in the position of the adventuring character, not the player. On the other hand, if the player gasps in horror, it's a good sign that his character should be horrified, too.

How to Make a Horror Check: Like the die roll for fear, a horror check is a saving throw vs. paralyzation. The character's "magical defense adjustment" for Wisdom also applies.

The table below lists common modifiers for a horror check. As DM, you're encouraged to apply others as you see fit.

Table of Horror Modifiers

Character is lawful good	−1
Character is of any evil alignment	+1
Character knows a person in the horror scene	−2
Close friend or family member in horror scene	−4
Closed quarters	−1
Open area (room to run)	+1

Failing a Horror Check: A character who fails a horror check is stunned for 1 round; he cannot move, attack, or defend himself. Roll 1d6 to discover what happens to the character next. Results are shown below. In the descriptions of each result, "horror scene" refers to whatever caused the horror.

Failed Horror Check Results

1	Aversion
2	Revulsion
3	Obsession
4	Senseless Rage
5	Mental Shock
6	Fearstruck

1. Aversion. The character cannot bear to look at the horror scene or stay in an enclosed space with that scene. In open spaces, he must stay at least 30 feet away. Each time he willingly violates these limits, the character is automatically fearstruck. (He panics and flees; see above.) When the character does not intentionally violate the limits imposed above, he has 1 round to remove himself from the scene to avoid being fearstruck. For example, if he opens a door and sees the horrifying sight, he can close the door to avoid dropping his weapon and fleeing like a headless chicken.

Aversion lasts a month. A character who encounters a similar scene during this time must avoid it, too, or become fearstruck. The effects are automatic; the character does not make a new horror check for the subsequent scene.

2. Revulsion. This is a stronger version of the result above. The character cannot bear to view or be near anything that even suggests the horror scene. For example, a character who has witnessed an unusually bloody scene may be repulsed by red wine or a cut of rare meat. The revulsion lasts a month.

3. Obsession. The horrifying experience plays itself in the character's mind over and over again. By day, he continually talks about the event. By night, he mutters still more and cannot sleep. If his lids close, it's only for a few moments at a time—not enough to provide rest or heal a point of damage. Each sleepless night reduces all his combat rolls by −1. The penalties are cumulative to a maximum of −4. Priests and wizards suffer an additional handicap; on a day following a sleepless night, they cannot memorize spells.

A *sleep* spell offers limited relief. The sleeper doesn't suffer the −1 penalty, but he also doesn't recover previously lost points. A *sleep* spell does grant priests and wizards enough rest to memorize spells the next day.

An "obsessed" character can make a saving throw vs. paralyzation once a week to shake his obsession.

4. Senseless Rage: The character is filled with rage at what he has experienced. He has only one desire: to smash and destroy the horror scene. He attacks anything that gets in his way.

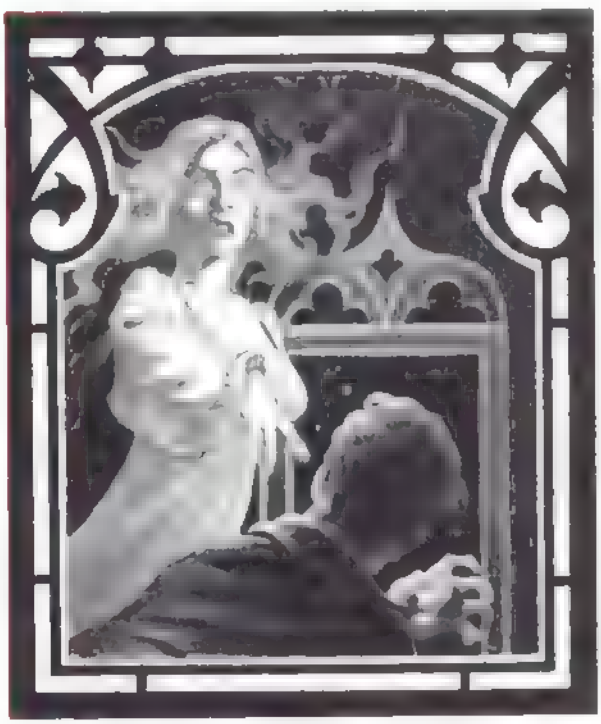
He gains a +2 bonus to his "to hit" and damage rolls, and he can attack twice as often as normal. Even if the horror scene is destroyed, the enraged character continues to attack as if it were not so. After the third round of senseless rage, he can make a saving throw vs. paralyzation every other round (on rounds 4, 6, 8, etc.). A successful save ends the character's mad attack.

The rage lingers for a month, like hot coals waiting to ignite. Whenever the character encounters a similar horror scene during that month, he repeats his save vs. paralyzation with a −2 penalty. If he fails, he goes berserk again (skip the d6 roll that determines horror results). If he succeeds, the rage is gone.

5. Mental Shock: The character remains stunned for at least 3 rounds. After that, he can make a saving throw vs. paralyzation each round. If his first or second roll succeeds, he regains his composure. But if he fails three consecutive saving throws (while in shock), he slips into deep shock. Characters in deep shock can make a save to relieve it only once every hour.

The effects of mental shock linger for a month. During that time, if the character confronts a similar horror scene, he must repeat the horror check with a −2 penalty. If he fails, he suffers mental shock once again (skip the d6 roll that determines results).

6. Fearstruck: The character behaves just as if he had failed a fear check. For the next month, each time he experiences something that closely resembles the horror scene, he must make a new horror check with a −2 penalty. If he fails the check, he is instantly fearstruck.



Removing Horror: The effects of a failed horror check usually fade in a month. Sometimes magic can speed the recovery. For example, a successful *forget* spell would revive a character quickly. An *emotion* spell for courage would do nothing, however; it negates fear, not horror. Repeated exposure to similar horror scenes eventually might numb the character to it, and eliminate the need for a horror check.

Fear and Horror Together

Some situations evoke both fear and horror. For example, when a character sees a fellow adventurer lying limp and pale in the arms of a powerful vampire, the scene may horrify him. If the vampire looks up with a sneer, the character may fear the creature, too. When both a fear and a horror check are required, the player rolls the horror check first. If the roll fails, the fear check isn't necessary. If the character's horror check succeeds, the player must roll a second saving throw for fear.

Optional Rules

Fear and horror checks should produce believable results. As DM, you should feel free to bend or modify any rule above to meet that goal. Here are two examples:

- If you think a horror scene is awful enough to stun characters, but is highly unlikely to send them screaming, then skip the d6 roll.
- "Replays" count. If a character has successfully faced an awful creature or scene before, then he should be less likely to falter when he faces it again. Each successful fear or horror check for a particular encounter gives characters a +2 bonus vs. similar encounters later. (The bonuses are cumulative. For ease of bookkeeping, they should last for one adventure only.)

Chapter V: WEREBEASTS AND VAMPIRES

These pages reveal the secrets of vampires and werebeasts, two of the most important creatures in Ravenloft. Each may pass as an ordinary man, but inside them lurks a monster. They have become creatures of night and shadow, the consumers of blood and flesh. Some relish their condition, basking in the power and freedom it brings. For others, transformed against their will, the affliction is an agonizing form of slavery.

Lycanthropy

It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad

—William Shakespeare
Othello, act V, scene ii

Lycanthropes are humans (or humanoids) who can assume an animal form. Werewolves—men who turn into wolves—are most common. Other examples include werefoxes, wererats, and werebears. In Ravenloft, virtually any carnivore between the size of a dog and a bear can be a lycanthrope, even a shark or crocodile. Omnivores are less likely candidates, but not impossible. Most werebeasts are furry animals, however.

The AD&D® 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* discusses lycanthropy in Chapter 15. As noted, lycanthropy is a natural condition in some cases, and a kind of acquired affliction in others. Most of the description in the DMG still applies in this demiplane, but Ravenloft adds a few new twists.

True or Natural Lycanthropy

True or natural lycanthropy is hereditary. The werebeast was born with his condition, and he will die with it, too. *Cure disease* has no effect; this is not that kind of sickness.

In Ravenloft, most natural lycanthropes can assume three forms: human, a particular animal's form, and a hybrid of both. The human form may have a subtle animal characteristic, such as eyebrows that meet over the bridge of the nose, or long index fingers. (Of course, many normal humans have these same characteristics.) The animal form usually is somewhat larger than normal, but it is not so strange that a person would doubt its authenticity. The hybrid or "man-beast" form has a human foundation: two arms, two legs, a human torso, and an upright posture. But the rest of the creature reflects his animal form. For example, a werebear in hybrid form usually has thick fur, sharp claws, and the head of a bear

In all three forms, true lycanthropes are equally intelligent and remain completely in control of their actions. They transform themselves at will, not in response to the calling of a full moon, as described in folklore. These monsters retain their immunities and most of their abilities at all times. For example, a steel bullet through the heart won't kill a werewolf, regardless of his form. On the other hand, a silver bullet usually *would* destroy him, regardless of his form.

All werebeasts have at least one nonmagical Achilles' heel. In other words, there is one thing that can mean their destruction, and it is available to anyone. For the werewolf, it's silver, and possibly wolfsbane.

Natural lycanthropes view other humanoids as prey to be slaughtered for food and pleasure. To mask their true nature, werebeasts masquerade as normal members of human society. They borrow whatever customs they please, dabble in politics, and use weapons and tools from any human culture. But in truth, they have their own society and their own rules of conduct. They are cultural parasites, borrowing only those customs that entertain them or help them survive.

A natural werebeast can transmit a contagion to his victims, infecting them with the cursed lycanthropy of folklore. In Ravenloft, a natural werebeast sometimes enslaves his victims, creating a pack of willing (and unwilling) servants. When the infected lycanthropes change to animal form, the true werebeast may control their actions. In the deadliest cases, a true lycanthrope also may have the power to trigger his victims' shape change. (See below.)

Lycanthropy: The Dreaded Disease

True lycanthropes harbor a serum in their blood and saliva that controls their shape change. If they transmit even a single cell of this serum to a normal humanoid—by biting them, for example—the victim acquires the disease lycanthropy. In other worlds, the chance of contracting lycanthropy is 1% per hit point of damage suffered. In Ravenloft, it's 2%. Furthermore, any lycanthrope—true or diseased—can pass the disease to his victims.

The contagion lies dormant until something triggers a transformation. Then the cells of the serum multiply wildly and force the victim's shape change. For common werewolves, a full moon triggers the change; on the night of a full moon, and each night immediately preceding and following it, the victim changes into a wolf. Other werebeasts may change only when they become angry or fall into a battlelust. In Ravenloft, even two creatures of a similar nature may be transformed by different events. (Members of a single pack, however, usually share the same trigger.) The following table lists situations that commonly transform victims of this disease into vicious, bloodthirsty beasts.

Sample Werebeast Triggers

1	Phase of the moon
2	Day vs. night
3	Exposure to a particular type of plant, animal, or mineral
4	Extreme fear
5	Sleep
6	Particular sound or music
7	Intense passion
8	Sight of blood
9	Physical pain
10	DM's choice

Unlike true lycanthropes, victims of the disease have only two forms: human and beast, or human and man-beast. ("Human" may represent any humanoid race.) When not in human form, the victim has the mind of an animal. He knows not what he does, and cannot control his actions. (If he's a PC, the DM runs the character.) Unfortunately, those for whom he has the strongest feelings as a human—even love—tend to be the victims of his attacks. When the lycanthrope regains his human form, he has only vague, dreamlike recollections of his animal actions. In many cases, the lycanthrope is to be pitied as well as feared.

In human form, a diseased lycanthrope has normal human abilities and frailties. In animal or man-beast form, he has the immunities and abilities of the werebeast. This means that he, too, can infect someone with his disease. A simple bite will do. A lycanthrope who is pregnant transmits the disease to her unborn child.

Even in the material plane, lycanthropy is a horrid disease. In Ravenloft, it is worse. Some true lycanthropes in this demiplane can enslave victims they personally infect. These master lycanthropes cannot control a victim who is in human form, but sometimes they can trigger the victim's shape change.

Anyone who witnesses the shape change of a character with this disease must make a horror check, and possibly a fear check, depending upon the circumstances. If the witness knows the lycanthrope well, a −2 penalty is applied to the horror check.

Ridding the lycanthrope of his disease is difficult in Ravenloft. No cure is possible until the true lycanthrope who ultimately infected him is slain. Since a diseased lycanthrope can infect

other humans, who in turn can infect others, the original source of the disease may be extremely difficult to trace.

Once the master lycanthrope is dead, the victim must complete a series of arduous steps to cure his disease. First, he must perform a ritual of piety to cleanse himself. Next, he must assume his bestial form. (In other words, the form must be triggered. Usually, that means waiting for a full moon.) A priest must then cast three spells upon the beast: *atonement*, *cure disease*, and *remove curse*.

As the contagion is stripped from the victim's body, the victim makes a saving throw. In other realms, a diseased lycanthrope must make a successful saving throw vs. polymorph to complete the cure. In Ravenloft, he must make a successful saving throw vs. death.

A save vs. death is appropriate because the final step of this cure causes excruciating pain. Withstanding that pain requires exceptional fortitude and strength of will. But another, more serious reason for the different saving throw exists. Ravenloft allows most victims only a single chance to escape the bonds of lycanthropy. In virtually every case, the victim will be a lycanthrope for life if he fails this save. Usually, the priest and other attendants mercifully kill the beast on the spot. The victim, in peaceful death, regains his human form. Only when the powers of Ravenloft intervene is this execution stayed. (As an optional rule, you might assume this is always true of PCs.) On these rare occasions, the victim may be allowed a second chance to effect a cure. Or he miraculously may find himself free of the disease—at least for a while.

Vampirism

Fear, at my heart, as at a cup
My lifeblood seemed to sip.

—Coleridge,
"The Ancient Mariner"

Vampires—undead creatures who drain the essence of life from their victims—are almost as varied in Ravenloft as the men and women who become them. Most, however, share basic traits with the creatures listed in the AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium* and the new monsters section of this work.

Three paths lead to vampirism in Ravenloft: "deadly desire," a curse, and the life-draining attack of another vampire. "Deadly desire" means the person wants to become undead. He seeks an endless existence and is willing to sacrifice life itself to attain it. The dark powers usually grant his wish, but he also may be transformed by a powerful spell or magical item.

A curse resembles deadly desire in that the victim's own actions usually cause the vampirism. Unlike the victim of his own "desire," however, a vampire who is cursed does not wish to become undead. But like his counterpart, he longs for eternal life, youth, or power. And the dark powers of Ravenloft heed his wishes. Strahd Von Zarovich fits this description.

In both cases above, the vampires tend to remain individuals, with a unique package of abilities and vulnerabilities. Vampires created by "desire" sometimes wield more power, because their inherent evil boosts their abilities. Cursed vampires may be weaker if they regret the deed that led to their transformation, and do not fully embrace their undead nature.

The third path to vampirism—the one that most often affects PCs—results from the attack of another vampire. Any vampire can create others of its kind by draining its victims' life force until they die. Such victims become vampiric creatures in the style of their creator, but usually are weaker. These victims are completely subservient to their undead creator, who is called a "master vampire" or "vampire lord." The servants may create vampires, too, but those victims become new slaves for the vampire lord. No slave can acquire slaves of its own. A master vampire usually destroys his slaves after they have served him a few years. He *must* destroy them, lest they become too wise and threaten his own existence.

Vampires of this third kind often bitterly despise their master, and fantasize about his destruction. When not under his explicit commands, the servants plot to overthrow their vampire lord. A few actually succeed. When the master is destroyed, the slaves are free; they are no longer servile. Any vampire they create becomes their own slave, and they, in turn, become masters.

Because of the personal danger involved, few vampires choose to become vampire lords. Instead, they drain only enough to feed, but do not kill their prey. Or, if they do kill a victim,

they damage the corpse to prevent vampirism—by severing the head, removing the heart, or burning the entire body.

A slave vampire is not a mate, however. Love, lust, or obsession may drive a master vampire to create a special bond with a particular victim—a bond that surpasses ordinary enslavement. To create this union, the master samples his victim's blood—once, twice, or several times. Just before the victim has been drained to death, the master replenishes her with blood of his own. Only a few master vampires are capable of this act. The victim is still the master's slave, but in a way, the master becomes her slave, too (assuming the victim is female). She often can sense his thoughts. In this way, she has the power to protect him in times of need, but could also harm him. Despite the pronouns used here, gender is not a limiting factor. Master vampires may be male or female, and so may their mates.

In many ways, vampirism is still a mystery. But one thing is sure: no matter how or why vampires come into being, vampires they must stay. There is no cure for this affliction. Complete and utter destruction is the only means of removing this curse, and at best, it's a difficult task.

Variety: The Spice of Undeath

As noted above, vampires in Ravenloft may enjoy varied powers and abilities—especially creatures who are cursed or become vampires by intent. Not every vampire is unique, however. Most players know the vampires described in *Monstrous Compendium 1*. Even these "garden variety" vampires dwell in Ravenloft, though many are slaves.

Regardless of species, all vampires in Ravenloft are evil, undead creatures. They enjoy all the normal immunities of undead, such as *sleep*, *charm*, etc. Each must feed on the life's essence of its victims, which may or may not involve draining actual blood. In addition, all vampires have at least one Achilles' heal—a weakness that can lead to their destruction. Such weaknesses usually are linked to the forces of good (such as holy items) or to the vampire's personal curse.

Most vampires can pass as normal humans. (That's what makes them so horrid.) All are virtually invincible in normal combat. That doesn't mean they never appear to suffer defeat. But somehow, some way, the vampires manage

Vampire Abilities by Age

Age	Hit Dice	Str.	Save vs. Charm	Magic Resist.	Rnds. of Sunlight Withstood	Weapon Needed to Hit	Immune to the Effects of
0-99	8+3	18/76	−2	0	0	+1	—
100-199	9+3	18/91	−2	5%	1	+1	Garlic
200-299	10+2	18/00	−3	10%	5	+2	Mirrors
300-399	11+1	18/00	−3	15%	10	+2	—
400-499	12	19	−4(V)	20%	3 turns	+3	*Holy symbols
500+	13	19	−4(V)	25%	1 hour	+3	Running water

* NOT immune to being turned

NOTES:

Hit Dice: Vampires with 10 hit dice are turned as ghosts. Those with 11 or more hit dice are turned as liches.

Strength: The vampire's Strength does affect his combat modifiers for attack and damage rolls.

Save vs. Charm: Vampires that reach 400 years can *charm* with their voice. In this case, the listener does not suffer a negative modifier to his save. The range of the *charm* is 40 feet.

Magic Resistance: This is normal magic resistance, which is rolled before any saving throw.

Rounds of Sunlight Withstood: The vampire can tolerate this amount of sunlight without suffering damage or paralysis. He still abhors the sun, however, and must shade himself completely or try to take cover.

Weapon Needed to Hit: Weapons with less enchantment than the amount shown cannot cause physical damage to the vampire.

Immune to the Effects Of: Vampires develop a tolerance to the substances listed for their age. The results are cumulative. For example, at 100, the vampire may develop a tolerance to garlic. At 200, he also gains a tolerance to mirrors. (A mirror still won't show his reflection, but the object won't disturb him.) Vampires that are immune to holy symbols can still be turned, but they do not retreat from the presence of a strongly presented symbol. They still take damage if struck by the symbol, however. Vampires who are immune to running water take no damage when immersed in it.

to recover from normal combat and "live" to fight again.

Most vampires in Ravenloft also grow more powerful with age. In part, they simply grow wiser, learning new tactics and tricks. In addition, they become physically tougher. The table on page 28 shows a possible progression for common vampires (those listed in the *Monstrous Compendium 1*) and the classic vampire (nosferatu) in this work. As you can see, a 500-year-old "common" vampire is a fearsome opponent.

The Vampire Elite: The "Abilities by Age" table works best for common and nosferatu vampires (see the new monster descriptions at the back of this book). Many vampires in Ravenloft have unique powers and abilities beyond those listed above—especially vampires who become undead through a curse or deadly desire. Strahd, for example, is a wizard as well as a vampire. These special creatures are Ravenloft's "vampire elite."

The tables below are designed to help you create elite vampires of your own. Choose 4 to 6 powers and 2 to 4 weaknesses for each creature. Don't select these characteristics with a roll of the die. Vampires designed in this fashion should have qualities reflecting their history or their curse. To that end, you also can design abilities and weaknesses of your own. The more closely you tailor a vampire to his history and personality, the more flavor you'll add to the game.

In most cases, powers that an elite vampire might acquire over future centuries won't affect game play. But sometimes you may wish to determine how the creature's *past* has shaped his abilities. Use the "Abilities by Age" table as a guide to the kinds of changes that may occur with age and experience. Strive to personalize the changes to create a history befitting a full-fledged character. For example, perhaps a distant family tie to lycanthropes makes the vampire vulnerable to silver. As he ages, gaining distance from his human ties, the vulnerability might diminish.

If you don't want to bother with such details, here are two simple rules that account for age: Increase the monster's total hit dice by 1 for each century he exists as a vampire. Alternately, add 1 hit point to the monster for every 25 years of existence, and increase the hit dice by 1 for each century.

Sample Vampire Powers

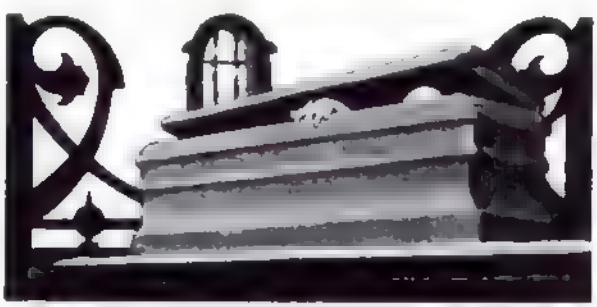
- Charm by gaze
- Charm by voice
- Invisibility
- Hide in shadows
- *Change self* as spell
- *Pass wall* as spell
- *ESP* as spell
- Shape change, 1-3 animal types
- Drain
- Gain HD from draining
- Gaseous form as potion
- Fly
- Magic resistance (10-25%)
- Death gaze
- Breathe a fog cloud
- *Spider climb* as spell
- *Heat metal* as spell
- *Pyrotechnics* as spell
- *Darkness* as spell
- Need +1, +2 or +3 magical weapon to hit
- Regenerate 3, 4 or 5 hps/round

Sample Vampire Drains

- Levels
- Strength
- Dexterity
- Constitution
- Intelligence
- Wisdom
- Charisma
- Hit points
- Spells

Sample Vampire Weaknesses

- Sunlight
- Moonlight
- Lack of moonlight
- Particular metal
- Particular wood
- Music
- Smell of a particular plant
- Running water
- Rain
- Fire
- Special ritual or ceremony
- Particular animal or monster
- Must request entrance to building
- True name being called
- Can't pass near an arcane or holy symbol
- Lie in a coma during the day
- Must sleep on own grave soil



Chapter VI: CURSES

This chapter explains how and why characters acquire curses, and how you, the DM, can design them. You won't find a bunch of die-rolling systems for designing a curse in Ravenloft. The job can't be reduced to a set of numerical rules. Each curse in Ravenloft is almost as unique as the person who suffers it. Curses may be commonplace in this shadowy realm, but they are anything but common.

Acquiring a Curse

In other AD&D® realms, curses arise from ordinary magic: someone casts a spell. Spellcasters' curses exist in Ravenloft, too. But they're child's play compared to a curse that comes from the power of the land itself. Not only are these darker curses more deadly, the victim can never make a saving throw against them.

In Ravenloft, there are three ways to suffer a curse. The first is self-inflicted; the victim's own actions attract the attention of Ravenloft's powers. The second is an act of vengeance or spite: another character so strongly desires revenge that the powers of Ravenloft grant his wish. The third method is most familiar: someone casts a spell. The effects of that spell may not be so familiar, however. As the chapter on spells explains, magic works differently in Ravenloft.

Spellcasters' Curses

These ordinary curses occur when a wizard or priest casts an appropriate spell. The *Player's Handbook* lists four common magical curses:

Quest (Pr 5)
Geas (Wiz 6)
Limited wish (Wiz 7)
Wish (Wiz 9)

Quest and *geas* have new results; see Chapter IX, "Spells in Ravenloft." *Bestow curse*, the reverse of the third-level wizard's spell *remove curse*, is too benign to call a "curse" in Ravenloft.

Chapter IX in this book adds two new weapons to the curse-caster's arsenal:

Divine curse (Pr 6)
Ancient curse (Pr 7)

The latter is adapted from a spell in the *Oriental Adventures* game accessory.

Clever players may find other ways to cast a curse. For example, a wizard might curse an especially low-bellied, thieving liar by *polymorphing* him into a snake. As DM, you may alter the results of any such curse if the spellcaster expects too much. You may also decide the spell fails completely.

Saving Throws: Characters can make saving throws against a spellcaster's curse according to the spell's description. Among the six spells highlighted above, *geas, divine curse,* and *ancient curse* allow no saves. A successful save against *quest* negates the spell. *Limited wish* and *wish* spells call for a special save. A wish that duplicates another spell's results also duplicates that spell's saving throw. Other wishes may or may not allow saves, according to the DM's judgement.

Self-Induced Curses

If a character commits an act of exceptional evil, or one directly contrary to his culture's beliefs, he may bring a curse upon himself. His actions become a twisted "call for help," which the darken land is only too eager to answer. Strahd suffers such a curse. He sought eternal youth and killed his own brother to attain it. The land fulfilled his desire—and in the process condemned him to eternal misery as an undead lord in the demiplane Ravenloft. Strahd lost his freedom and the woman he desired. But he gained his immortality. It is certainly not the result for which he hoped. But a curse rarely pleases its victim.

Self-induced curses are always tailored to their victim. To create such a perfect fit, the lands can reinvent geography, remake whole populations, and rewrite history. They know no bounds or limitations.

A small digression does not invoke such a curse. Nor does the cool, calculated evil of a serial killer. The dark powers respond only to evil coupled with intense emotion, such as anger, hatred, lust, envy, or greed. Of the seven deadly sins, only sloth fails to excite their attention.

Curse of Vengeance

Like the self-induced curse, a curse of vengeance is granted by the dark powers of Ravenloft. But in this case, the curse is not against the character who requests it. The curse affects someone who sorely wronged that character—someone who now must suffer the consequences.

Only natives of Ravenloft—those who live and die in this realm—can invoke a curse of vengeance. They need no magical skills. The strength of their emotions and their desire for revenge determines the power of the curse. A beggar woman could curse a lich king if her motivations were sufficiently strong. Death only enhances the results. If the "wronged" person dies shortly after evoking the curse, the potential power of the curse increases.

A curse of vengeance is unpredictable. Some are never granted at all. The stronger the cry for revenge, the more likely the response, but Ravenloft offers no guarantees. All vengeance curses have an equal chance of affecting the curser as well as the target. The land usually grants what the curser requests, but not necessarily what he desires. For example, a character who proclaims, "I'd like to see you suffering in the deepest, darkest pit" may find himself at the bottom of that same pit.

Designing a Curse

Curses play an integral role in Ravenloft adventures. The dark powers of this shadowy realm delight in the petty vengeances of its inhabitants, and tend to encourage them. Consider the curse a tool. Use it to flesh out an interesting NPC or to add intrigue to an encounter. At times, even a player character may suffer a curse. Exercise some restraint, however.

Every other character the PCs meet should not be the victim of a curse. Curses are more common and deadly in Ravenloft than in other realms, but they do not affect the majority of the population.

A curse should enhance the atmosphere of your adventures, not detract from it. The rules of thumb below will help you design an effective and interesting curse.

1. Never mention game mechanics
2. Avoid broad prohibitions
3. Make sure the curse is founded
4. Tailor the curse to the victim
5. Define constant or triggered effects
6. Include an escape clause
7. Define the strength of the curse

1. Never mention game mechanics. Game mechanics may lie at the heart of a curse. But the exterior should be camouflaged with prose that a character who actually lives in Ravenloft would understand. "Your THAC0 is has a −4 penalty from now on" is not only boring, it wrenches players from the game environment. You want to keep them wrapped up in the adventure, not worrying about exact die rolls. To lower a character's THAC0, you might design a curse that reads, "Your sword shall be dull evermore and your arms weak in battle." That sets the right mood. Determine the exact game effect, but don't announce it. Instead, let it become clear during the normal course of play.

Don't let players cast or invoke curses that mention game effects, either. That allows you to determine exactly how the powers of Ravenloft interpret their requests. For example, if a PC has invoked the curse above, you might allow the victim to avoid part of the curse if he chooses a weapon other than a sword. That's more difficult when a curse specifies game mechanics.

2. Avoid broad prohibitions. A broad prohibition rarely makes a good curse—especially for a PC. Strive to design consequences for a given action, rather than trying to ban the action itself. If you say, "You may never wear armor again," next thing you know the character says, "I'm putting on my plate mail." Then what? The curse should hint at some nonlethal consequence for a specific action or situation. For example, the curse above might become "Armor shall burn

like fire upon your skin." The character is free to put on his favorite plate mail, if he's willing to suffer the consequences. (You might decide the character suffers a hit point of burn damage every round, for example.)

3. Make sure the curse is founded. Characters who flippantly cry, "I'll curse you, Jean-Paul!" are not casting a curse. Real curses don't stem from a whim or an isolated moment of madness. They arise from deep-seated hate, jealousy, or greed—a negative emotion that has grown stronger with time. The character may keep that emotion hidden from his family and friends. But inside it builds, and the land knows it. Finally, when that person can no longer contain his emotion, he invokes the curse.

By its nature, a curse of vengeance implies that the victim has done something wrong. He may not have meant to do it. He may not have done it at all. And if he did, the act need not be evil. What matters is that the person who invokes the curse *believes* the victim has wronged him horribly. Of course, if the victim did commit a heinous act, the chance of the curse being granted increases.

4. Tailor the curse to the victim. A curse should relate to the person who suffers it. Let's say an embezzler has robbed poor Peter for years, and Peter wishes a curse upon him. Transforming the thief into a frog is hardly fitting. On the other hand, a curse that drives the thief mad at the sight of money neatly reflects his crime. In fairy tales, the witch transforms the prince into a frog because he's handsome—the punishment fits the crime. Strive for a sense of "poetic justice" when designing your curses. The curse should remind the victim of his transgressions (whether they're real or imagined by the curser).

The curse also should fit the victim's true nature. For example, you might curse a character with lawful alignment to behave in a chaotic manner.This is not a simple alignment change, merely a label for the action of the curse. For example, a lawful neutral character might be cursed to have fits of random wandering.

Consider the victim's race, class, and ability scores before bestowing a curse. Sentencing a character to life underground makes little sense when that character is a dwarf. On the other hand, cursing a fighter with a strength of 18/00 to have "only the strength of an average man when ere he raises his sword" works quite nicely.

If the victim is a PC, consider the character's player, too. A dwarf may shiver with horror if he's forced to remain above ground. But the dwarf's player probably won't feel a thing. That's just fine if you'd like to encourage better role-playing. On the other hand, if your game tends to inspire laughter instead of fear, you might choose a curse with more potent imagery for the player.

5. Define constant or triggered effects. When designing a curse, consider when and how often its effects are felt. Strahd's curse, for example, plagues him constantly. His undead state never changes, and it affects everything he does. Unfortunately, PCs who suffer a similar curse tend to get used to it—some may even start to like it. Not every curse has this effect. But when it does, it ceases to be a curse.

You can approach this problem in two ways. First, you can design a curse that is always present, but doesn't always affect the character. The curse hangs over the character like a dark cloud—perhaps literally. For example, a character who "melts under the tears of heaven" is fine

in sunny weather. But when he's caught in a storm, his legs turn to mush and can't support him. You also can design a curse that stays dormant until something triggers the effects. Preferably, the character's own actions are the trigger. For example, let's say a vain character has received this curse: "You are paralyzed by fear at the sight of your own reflection." As soon as that character gazes into a still, clear pond, he's paralyzed.

6. Include an escape clause. When cursing a PC, you should grant the victim a way to escape the effects. (NPCs may enjoy the same privilege if the story warrants it.) There are two escapes: avoidance and cure. A warrior whose sword always breaks in combat can avoid the curse by using a different weapon. The second escape, which actually removes the curse, should lie in the wording of the curse itself. In other words, the curse hints at some action or circumstance that will lift it. The escape clause may take the form of a riddle. If so, have a least one solution for the riddle in mind. If a creative player thinks of another clever solution, allow it to lift the curse, too.

Whether you provide an escape clause of avoidance or cure, the method should lie within the grasp of most players. However, those who can't discover or take advantage of the clause always can send their characters to a high-level priest. An *atonement* spell can lift any curse. For the spell to work, the cursed character must complete a heroic task—one that counters the evil deed which caused the curse. The priest must cast the spell soon after this deed occurs.

7. Define the strength of the curse. The strength of a curse is a critical decision. Not every curse should place the victim in peril. A curse also can add humor to an adventure, promote the plot, or enhance the mood. A weak curse can be just as effective as a powerful one, and can be more fun, too. What effect best suits your game? To help you decide, here are five broad categories for determining the strength of a curse:

Embarrassing
Frustrating
Troublesome
Dangerous
Lethal

Embarrassing: An embarrassing curse rarely affects combat directly. Instead, it creates a nuisance, especially when the victim is between battles. Some examples: the victim's nose grows longer whenever he tells a lie, the character glows in the dark, or can't speak when more than six people are present. Such a curse usually arises from a minor transgression against an NPC with a small degree of power. A magic user casts it, because a minor transgression rarely sparks the interest of Ravenloft's dark powers.

Frustrating: A frustrating curse tends to interfere with a character's everyday life. A few examples: The victim can't stop eating and gains five pounds a week. He is subject to episodes of aimless wandering. He can't stomach the smell of animals. These curses go beyond simple embarrassment, but fall short of creating major problems. They typically arise from moderate transgressions, and may be granted by the powers of Ravenloft.

Troublesome: This curse affects important aspects of the character's life. It does not overwhelm him minute by minute, but the victim does have to change his lifestyle to accommodate the curse. Some examples: The character cannot stand the light of day. He is mute. The presence of iron causes him serious pain. All three examples represent a major problem, but none is deadly. In a role-playing adventure, "troublesome" is the most useful strength for a curse. Any form of transgression can bring it about.

Dangerous: In the right circumstances, a dangerous curse can be deadly. Most undermine or usurp the character's self-control. Two examples: A man attacks as a berserker when he sees money. A character changes into an uncontrollable beast. Only very evil acts warrant a dangerous curse. Player characters should not suffer a curse this strong unless they can remove it quickly.

Lethal: Lethal curses are the strongest, and the worst kind to receive. All aspects of the victim's life change for the worse under the influence of such a curse. Strahd Von Zarovich has a lethal curse. He is no longer a living human, but instead is a vampire. Even if the curse were lifted, his body would crumble to dust from the weight of the ages. Truly despicable acts of calculated evil can earn a lethal curse. It is not recommended that player characters ever suffer this fate.

Chapter VII: GYPSIES

The gypsies of Ravenloft—or *Vistani*, as they call themselves—are a mysterious people. They wander the lands and travel the Mists, independent of the bonds which shackle lords to their domains and natives to their dreary, oppressed existence. In some ways they are the most powerful characters in Ravenloft, because in spirit, the gypsies are free.

Like the gypsies in other realms, Vistani have dark skin, dress in vibrant clothing, and rarely linger in any location. Their hair is black and shining, though some are born with amber tresses. Their eyes are black and luminous, and in a few tribes, are of a shape that suggests a distant link to the Orient. But it is more than physical appearance that defines a Vistana. The gypsies in Ravenloft are unique. No ordinary gypsy who wanders into the demiplane shares the mystical powers of the Vistani of Ravenloft.

Gypsy Powers

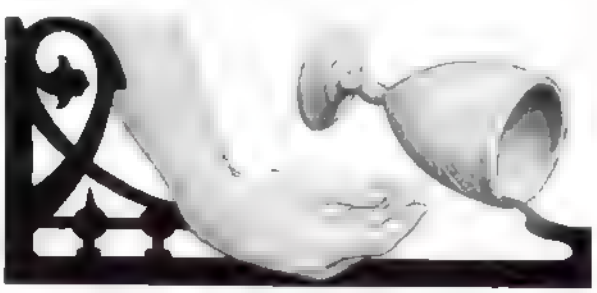
Vistani have an ageless, timeless quality. True, their babes grow to be men and women, and their men and women grow old, but many elders seem to have lived for centuries. It is as if they have distanced themselves from time, just enough to slow its disintegration of their bodies and stop its erosion of their minds.

Perhaps they become independent of time. To the gypsies, time is not an accidental sequence of cause and effect, or a linear track which they are forced to follow. It is an intricate web, in which threads of the future are closely entwined with those of the past. To gypsy seers, an event with seemingly no relationship to another can become a window to another place and time—a window which opens for the gypsies alone.

Only Vistani can tell the future in Ravenloft. A tiny crystal becomes an object from which the gypsy can divine an inner vision of things to come. Cards, when touched by any person and turned by a gypsy, can tell events that lie in that person's past as well as his future. Some gypsies read palms. Others cast bones or gaze at tea leaves in the bottom of a cup. In some, the gift of seeing is so strong that they need only close their eyes and a vision appears. Every Vistana has the potential to see the future, but not all have an equal ability to use their gift. Many dark-eyed wanderers have the power to cure as well as to curse. Some of their talents involve rituals or potions. Certain lizards in the Balinoks, for example, help create a gypsy brew with wondrous powers of healing. The fruits of Barovia, when sliced in a given way under a certain moon, are rumored to form the basis of deadly curse. (Only Vistani know the precise details.) But some gypsies need no props to harm or heal. They need only their own gaze, and the powers of the evil eye.

The evil eye is the ability to cast an enchantment with only a look. It is most common among women, and seems to increase with age. Old gypsy women, whose hair has gone white and whose teeth have gone completely, may command the greatest respect. Their curses, when the will is strong, are said to rival the powers of Ravenloft. Usually, however, a gypsy curse is embarrassing or dangerous rather than deadly.

Only a fool crosses a gypsy, because every crime against their kind, no matter how secret, may return to haunt the offender. Even offenses against the dead can be dangerous. It is said that he who robs the body of a gypsy, especially with malice, may find that his fingers have turned black the following morn. The blackness cannot be washed away. Every living Vistana knows this sign, and will recognize the bearer as an enemy of gypsy tribes. With repeated wrongs, the blackness may spread, until the offending flesh begins to fall away like that of a leper. So say the gypsies, at least.



Vistani are gifted explorers. They can enter the Misty Border and sometimes determine where and when they shall leave it. According to legend, they can even enter and leave the demiplane, though many say it is because they know of portals no others have discovered. If a *giorgio*, or nongypsy, wins their confidence, Vistani may allow him to travel with them. No gypsy can be forced to act as a guide, however. Nor can any giorgio stow away on a caravan and hope to escape the demiplane. The Vistani are protected by the Mists. Like chaff is culled from wheat, the Mists of Ravenloft separate unwanted followers from the full-blooded Vistani, and send them different ways.

Gypsies have little to fear from the rulers of Ravenloft's domains. Most lords tolerate them, and many are in awe of their powers. The gypsies' ability to travel the Mists and foretell the future commands great respect. Some lords forge agreements with the tribes. Count Strahd Von Zarovich, for example, formed an alliance with the gypsy Madame Eva many years ago. He gave her the potion of immunity to his choking fog. Today, nearly all Vistani know this formula. They charge travelers for a drink of the potion and then ferry their customers across Barovia. In return for the Count's cooperation, Vistani inform Strahd of the activities in other domains, and act as spies for him in his own.

Lifestyle

Gypsies are vagabonds, wandering from domain to domain, rarely pausing more than a week in any one place. Progress on the road is languid and unhurried. Children scamper beside the wagons, gleefully engulfed in their own clouds of dust.

Each tribe is an extended family of ten to fifty members. A man is the head of his own family, next replaced by his eldest son. However, a grandmother with powers of the evil eye commands the greatest respect of all. Gypsies cherish their children, perhaps because many die so tragically. The gypsies are blessed with many powers of healing, but they cannot prevent a stillbirth.

A gypsy home is called a *vardo*. These small, well-crafted caravans have tall wooden walls, an arched wooden roof, and a door at the back. The vardo is drawn by horses, and the driver sits up front on an outdoor seat. Most vardos are painted in vivid colors, such as turquoise, or black with gold and magenta highlights. The finest are carefully decorated with gilded carvings, picturing proud steeds, intricate flowers, or prancing deer. Even the wheels are sometimes painted gold. The vardo of a great gypsy lady may include tiny windows made of etched or tinted glass.

The vagabonds usually travel with a menagerie. Horses and a faithful mongrel or two trot alongside. Chicken crates are strapped beneath the wagons, and a tethered ox or goat may bring up the rear. Sometimes a trained bear follows the caravan, ready to amaze and entertain villagers at the tribe's next stop. A handler usually leads the bear.

Vistani pursue a number of occupations. Their traveling ways make them natural escorts and traders. They tell fortunes to those who are brave enough to hear them. (The future is often dark in Ravenloft.) Some foretell the weather to interested farmers. A few are thieves and con artists. Others are tinkers, knife grinders, or pot menders, selling their services from village to city. Many are entertainers, who earn money through music and dance. A particularly well-trained bear may not only dance, but also may ease weary muscles by walking on a paying customer's back.

Some tribes are also cagey horse-traders. Vistani have an unusual rapport with these animals. Only gypsies can break the wild colts of Nova Vaasa with any success, and their own horses carry the Nova Vaasan bloodlines. Their attachment to these beasts is so strong that when mother's milk is unavailable, a Vistani babe may suckle a mare.

Gypsies make their camps well away from a village or town, usually near a clear-running brook or spring-fed pool. When the days are warm, the children run naked, splashing in the water or relishing the lush, cool grass beneath their feet. Camps usually are well hidden. To find them, clever travelers look for the *vista-chiri*, tiny gray and white birds that are rumored to follow gypsies from land to land.

Each night, and again early in the morn, gypsies gather round a fire. For supper, each family passes one great pot, into which each person dips his own utensil. Vistani drink copious amounts of tea, and make a coffee that

is bitter and thick, like mud. In times of celebration, adults tip a glass of *aniso*, a drink that is flavored with aniseed.

Fire-building is a matter of honor among men. They have an uncanny ability to encourage wood to burn, even when the forest has been drenched with rain. When a tribe wishes to conceal an item of value or danger, a fire-builder may bury it deep beneath the fire site. Gypsy children often sleep outside. On bitter nights, their father may build a fire in a trench. When the timber is reduced to coals, he covers the embers with earth. The children sleep on top, beneath feather blankets and a tarp, preferably with an old dog for added warmth and company.

A boundless world is the gypsy's home, but his heart is open only to his own people. Gypsies reject their own kin if they are not of full blood, and marriage to a half-breed is forbidden. Vistani do not form friendships with giorgios readily, and rarely invite them into their midst. When escorting a traveler, they prefer to leave him in a town or village when establishing a camp, or may drop him at a peasant's home for the night. Only when a giorgio has earned respect, or has paid dearly for his safety in the camp, will he be allowed to join the Vistani's circle after twilight. Those who have been honored by such an invitation describe magical moments, when the gypsies have gathered round a glowing fire to play their instruments and dance for their own enjoyment.

As the fire rages, young women dance to the fervent sounds of fiddles, guitars, and tambourines. Their skirts sweep the earth, rising and falling as they twirl, and if you look closely, you can see the music swirling around them. As the embers glow red, and the sky turns from an inky blue to pitch black, the fiddler plays alone. He makes his instrument cry, in a song of lament so clear, so acute, that it can pierce the listener's heart and make it bleed in sympathy. When it ends, the leader of the tribe sings alone in the gypsy tongue. The lyrics tell his people that when the cock heralds the morn, they must move on.

Chapter VIII: TELLING THE FUTURE

Fortune-tellings can play an important role in Ravenloft adventures, adding atmosphere and mood, providing clues for PCs, and even shaping the plot of the adventure itself. Given a gypsy's reputation for seeing the future in this demiplane, players characters eventually will ask to have their fortunes told. Of course, a gypsy can always refuse, and so can you, as DM. But a gypsy whose palm is well greased is likely to foretell *something*, if only a lie. This chapter offers guidelines for handling fortune-telling in your own campaigns.

Predicting the Future in an RPG

Gypsy fortune-tellings add a wondrous and mysterious element to books and stories, but they can create real headaches in a role-playing campaign. The reason is obvious: PCs are unpredictable. As the DM, you cannot always guess what a PC will do in the next round, let alone in the days or weeks to come. Nor should you attempt to guide or dictate the player characters' actions in order to ensure that the future turns out as predicted. The players will feel cheated, and the game won't be much fun.

That doesn't mean it's impossible to tell meaningful fortunes in a role-playing scenario. With the right approach, you can devise a fortune-telling that predicts the future, lets adventurers act as they please, and still "comes true." There are three basic techniques for accomplishing this goal: ambiguity, removal, and conditional predictions.

"Ambiguity" means the fortune-teller's prediction is vague. The prediction doesn't need to be impossibly cryptic, but it should suggest several outcomes or meanings. As DM, your job is to make sure the prediction fits most of the likely courses of action. Oracles are famous for this kind of prediction. Their prophesies appear to make no sense at first, but after the fact, they seem to fit right in with what happened. Of course, that kind of convenience has its drawbacks. If a prediction is *too* vague, it does little or nothing to help adventurers until it's too late. Ambiguous predictions usually best serve to enhance the mood of the game and add flavor to the adventure.

"Removal" means that the prediction does not depend on the player characters' actions. A good DM never dictates his players' choices, and a good prediction doesn't either. Instead, the prediction involves changes in the environment, or events that are triggered by the actions of an NPC. These are elements you legitimately can control.

A prediction with conditions usually includes the word "if." *If* a character takes a certain action, then this will occur. The players still have a choice. They can perform the action stated, or do something else. The condition also may be an event. In other words, if "x" occurs, "y" will follow. A conditional prediction never assumes that the result will always come true.

Most good predictions combine two or all of the techniques above. For example, a seer may say, "He who gazes upon the orb of gold shall have his shielding burnt away." This simply may mean, "You cannot hide in sunlight." Alternately, it may refer to a deadly trap that burns metal. The prediction is vague; it could fit either of these results. It does not dictate the PCs' actions, and may just as easily refer to an NPC who gazes upon the orb. (Perhaps it's a tip that a vampire is involved in the plot.) The phrase suggests a condition, too; the shield will only burn away *if* someone gazes upon the orb. If the characters avoid the orb, they won't spoil the validity of the prediction.

Methods of Fortune-telling

Gypsies in Ravenloft use many methods to divine the future. "Scrying" is the most powerful technique. The fortune-teller, called the "seer," gazes upon an object, such as a crystal ball. In time, the object inspires a vision; the gypsy enters a private, inner world in which part of the future is revealed.

No one else can see the vision. It may be hazy and open to interpretation, or as clear as the crystal itself. For example, a seer who observes flames may interpret them as burning passion or rage, as well as a literal fire. The gypsy begins the scrying by concentrating on a person or place whose future is in question. There is no guarantee, however, that the vision will show an obvious link to this person or place, or even that a vision will occur.

A large crystal ball, sitting on a table in a

gypsy's tent, is the scrying device most often pictured in movies. Many other objects can induce a gypsy's powers of divination—a small crystal that fits in the palm of a hand, the embers of a fire, a still pool, a mirror, or a vessel of black ink, for example.

Other common methods of fortune-telling are described below. Most require the gypsy to read or interpret a sign. The "reader" is the gypsy who tells the fortune. The "enquirer" or "client" is the person who wants his or her future to be told. Gypsies in Ravenloft usually say that a divine force guides their readings (and only theirs), and determines which sign appears. Thus, they are not the author of fortune or fate, only the interpreter.

- **Cartomancy.** This is the art of telling fortunes with cards. Often, an ordinary playing deck is used. Each card has a meaning. The enquirer may shuffle or cut the cards, and perhaps draw the cards to be read. The reader interprets the cards that are turned.
- **Casting bones.** The enquirer casts a set of dried bones (usually from a chicken or other small animal) upon the floor. The relative position of the bones tells the reader about the future. Some gypsies use painted sticks instead of bones.
- **Casting runes.** The enquirer casts a set of small, flat stones on the ground. Each stone is marked with a rune representing a primal aspect of man or nature. By observing the runes that land face up, and studying their position, the reader can predict the enquirer's future. Some fortune-tellers cast dice instead of stones.
- **Reading tea leaves.** The enquirer drinks a cup of tea, leaving the dregs to settle at the bottom. The reader examines the arrangement of the leaves to predict the enquirer's future. For example, leaves that picture a bird in flight may indicate good fortune or travel, while mountains may indicate trouble or challenge ahead.

On rare occasions, a seer may gaze into a vessel which still contains tea from which the enquirer has sipped—or wine, as is more common. In either case, the beverage becomes a tool for scrying.

- **Palmistry.** It is said that the lines on a person's palm provide a crude map to his or her future. By examining that map, a gypsy can predict what is yet to come. Some gypsies obtain similar results by examining the bumps on a client's head (phrenology).
- **Physiognomy.** From a face, some gypsies can learn more than mood or emotion. The arrangement of features may tell them about the person's temperament and character. In rare cases, it may also help them divine the future.
- **Dream interpretation.** The reader interprets the dreams of a person to determine future events. Many dream-seers choose to put the subject into a trance to stimulate fresh visions.
- **Astrology.** Gypsies in Ravenloft may see the future in the stars. Each star, planet, and constellation means something, and the unique combinations of the planets as they pass through the star field may suggest the future.

The list above is by no means exhaustive. For example, nearly all gypsies can interpret movement of the skies—the flight of birds or the passage of clouds over the moon—and divine a simple message of the future. Each gypsy fortune-teller may favor one method over an another, in accordance with her ability to use it. (Most gypsy fortune-tellers in Ravenloft are female.)

No fortune-telling in Ravenloft is magical. At least, no character can detect the use of magic. Divining the future is a natural ability of the Vistani, who, by their own admission, are aided by greater, mysterious forces.

Designing a Fortune-Telling

The best fortune-telling method depends on what you hope to accomplish as a DM. Do you wish to add flavor to the game without revealing anything of value? Have you been caught off guard, and need a quick fortune for a PC? Then scrying, with vague predictions about passion, conquest, or conflict may be in order. Scrying also provides a way to give PCs small clues about a villain. Large clues, however, usually should come to light as a result of the PCs' actions and the players' cleverness. If a fortune reveals an important secret, it's best to do so with a kind of puzzle or message that requires thought.

Fortunes also can determine the shape of an adventure. In the 1982 adventure *Ravenloft* (which inspired this campaign setting), a fortune-telling dictates key aspects of the plot, including the villain's goal and the location of

magical items. Early in the story, a gypsy performs a special reading using an ordinary deck of playing cards. The players and the DM act out the reading with real cards. The reading does not resemble any real fortune-telling process, nor is it meant to. Rather, it serves to add flavor to the adventure and allows the players to take part in creating their "challenge."

The example below shows how you might design a similar card-reading for an adventure of your own.

Sample Card Reading: Three PCs are tracking a werewolf with extraordinary powers. They encounter a gypsy, and ask her to foretell their future in hopes of gaining insight to the beast's prowess.

As the DM, you're ready for this. Well in advance, you've decided to use the reading to determine the exact weaknesses of the werewolf, as well as the location of his lair. Using an ordinary deck of cards, you have assigned the following weaknesses to each suit, and associated it with an element of Nature to add flavor to the reading:

Suit	Vulnerability	Element
Diamonds	Silver	Earth
Hearts	Fire	Fire
Clubs	Alcohol	Water
Spades	Music	Air

You've also decided which cards in each suit signify one of four possible locations for the lair. For flavor, you assign a general meaning to each, which the gypsy will describe.

Card	Meaning	Lair
Any face	People	In town
Ace	Travel	No lair; he roams
3,5,7,9	Holy sign	Monastery
4,5,8,10	Sailor's sign	By the sea

You're ready to direct the reading. Carlotta, the gypsy, asks a PC to shuffle the cards. (The appropriate player does so.) She cuts the deck, and says, "Just as there are four suits in the cards, so there are four elements in Nature. The cards will reveal the true nature of your problem to me." Then she asks each of the three PCs to draw a card. Each player draws for his character.

The first player draws a 2 of clubs. You have only two things to reveal (the lair and vulnerability), and three cards to interpret. The PCs have not told Madame Carlotta of their quest. She says, "That which you seek is neither man nor beast." Obviously, you knew that as DM, but Carlotta did not, so this is in keeping with the reading's flavor.

The second player draws the 10 of spades. You decide the card will reveal the werewolf's vulnerability. Carlotta says, "This card reveals your strength. The spade is the symbol of water, while the 10 signifies a change for the worse. The water that changes men's hearts will be your advantage." The "10" had nothing to do with the vulnerability, so you made up the interpretation to fit. (Aren't you clever?)

The third player draws the king of diamonds. This card must reveal the lair. Madame Carlotta says, "This card reveals your destination. The king is the sign of men, and the diamond is the symbol of earth. You must search amongst men to find one that is not." To take advantage of the diamond suit's meaning, you might decide to position the lair in the home of a stonemason, quarry master, or grave digger.

You can use a reading like the one above to position important treasure, traps, or creatures in any adventure. Avoid using it to randomly plan an entire adventure. These devices should support a story, not replace it. For example, a fortune-telling may dictate where a vampire's coffins are hidden, but it cannot create that vampire's personal history.

The meanings assigned to the cards above are completely arbitrary. When designing a similar reading, you could assign any meaning to a card. For example, the four suits may represent the four seasons, or the four quarters of the moon. Try to make the assignments seem plausible, however. If the reading is meant to reveal the location of an ioun stone, the suit of diamonds is a more logical symbol than spades. Likewise, information about a woman might logically be linked to a queen. Remember, you don't have to use all 52 cards in a reading. Create a smaller deck if it suits your purposes.

You also can change the meaning of the cards from reading to reading. Depending on how they are cut or played, cards have different meanings in "real" readings. There's no reason the same wouldn't be true in Ravenloft. In one reading, the suits may answer questions relating to the elements; in another, they may answer questions about direction, representing the four points of a compass. A gypsy may even declare that an initial draw of the cards (or throw of the stones, etc.) determines which kind of message will be revealed.

Fortune-tellings like the one in the example above have a key advantage: they involve players. The players draw a card, and the result helps determine what they learn or what they must face. Unfortunately, a fortune-telling like this also takes time to prepare. If the PCs don't visit a gypsy, you must choose "contingency" outcomes yourself and incorporate them in the adventure. You also face another challenge: flavor. Actual fortune-tellings have a mystical aura because they divine the future, thereby cheating Father Time. The telling above does the reverse: it *determines* the future. Your job is to perform the reading in such a way that players believe they are glimpsing a future that is set in stone.

Scrying, on the other hand, is much easier to role-play. It lends itself to vague interpretations and fleeting glimpses of events that occur independently of the PCs' actions. Unfortunately, a scrying also can seem contrived, especially if it is too nebulous. And if nothing the player does will affect the fortune, he or she may decide the telling is unimportant. Scryings work best if you prepare in advance and know which clues you'd like to reveal.

No matter which method of fortune-telling you choose, select one that fits the mood and flavor of your adventure. If you have designed a domain that is ruled by an Oriental vampire, for example, a card reading may not be appropriate. A better choice would be to cast sticks.

When Gypsies Tell Lies

Every gypsy in Ravenloft has the potential to tell the future accurately. Not every gypsy can, however. Vistani are natural con artists, and Ravenloft is full of fake seers who eagerly lighten the purses of gullible travelers. Some charlatans, especially those who travel alone or in small numbers, are not even gypsies.

There is no way to tell in advance whether a fortune-teller—especially a scryer—can truly divine the future. As a general rule, any gypsy tribe with over 20 gypsies has a true seer among them, usually an elderly woman. In smaller tribes, the chance of encountering a true seer is 50%. If a seer has predicted the future correctly on other occasions, it is safe to say that she is a true seer.

But even true seers may speak falsely. Any gypsy may choose to lie, depending on her reaction to the enquirer. The seer may have a grudge against the person, or may feel that she can get more gold by not telling the truth. False seers tend to predict such things as, "You will have an opportunity for riches, if you do not squander it" or "You will meet the woman of your dreams, but you may not recognize her." The client must pay more if he wants additional details. Absolute charlatans rarely predict anything horrid, because it's bad for business.

False seers should keep your players on guard, but not overwhelm them. If the gypsies in your campaign lie or make mistakes too often, you'll destroy the players' confidence in the predictions, as well as their interest. If that happens, PCs will cease to seek out seers, and you'll lose a valuable tool for Ravenloft adventures.

Chapter IX:
SPELLS IN RAVENLOFT

Ravenloft is insulated from outside forces, particularly the forces of good. Some spells have new effects as a result, especially those involving divination, summoning, and necromancy. This chapter describes changes to familiar spells in Ravenloft. At the end of the chapter, you'll find several new spells, too.

Altered Magic

Priests and wizards do not know the altered effects of a spell until they cast it. Once it is cast, they instantly know all changes to that spell unless the description below states otherwise (*ESP* is an example). Any magical item that casts or imitates an altered spell is subject to the same changes. In such cases, the caster is not informed of the changes.

Priest Spells

Spells from the sphere of summoning may be unusually limited. Ravenloft is severed from normal realms, and a given domain may not offer a full complement of animals and monsters. Priests cannot summon an animal that doesn't live in the domain they're visiting. Check the chapter explaining mapped areas. If the domain's description does not state otherwise, you can assume that all normal animals are available.

If the summoned animal is a type the lord of the domain can control, the lord's power takes precedence over the priest's magic. The animal still appears when summoned. But it may not be friendly, depending on its lord's instructions.

The priest spells listed below work differently in Ravenloft. Spells immediately preceded by an asterisk require a powers check. (See Chapter III, "The Reshaping of Characters.") A description of the changes follows the table, supplementing the rules in the *Player's Handbook*. For more convenient referencing, the reverse of a spell is listed in italics beside its major counterpart. If the counterpart works normally in Ravenloft, it appears in parentheses.

Altered Priest Spells

Detect Evil/*Detect Good* (1st)
Remove Fear (1st)
Know Alignment (2nd)
*Animate Dead (3rd)
(Cure Disease)/**Cause Disease* (3rd)
*Feign Death (3rd)
Negative Plane Protection (3rd)
Remove Curse/**Bestow Curse* (3rd)
*Speak With Dead (3rd)
Abjure (4th)
Call Woodland Beings (4th)
Reflecting Pool (4th)
Commune (5th)
Dispel Evil (5th)
Magic Font (5th)
Plane Shift (5th)
Quest (5th)
*Raise Dead/**Slay Living* (5th)
True Seeing (5th)
Conjure Fire Elemental/*Dismiss Fire Elemental* (6th)
Find The Path (6th)
Word of Recall (6th)
Astral Spell (7th)
Conjure Earth Elemental/*Dismiss Earth Elemental* (7th)
*Gate (7th)
Holy Word/**Unholy Word* (7th)
*Reincarnation (7th)
*Resurrection/** *Destruction* (7th)
Restoration/**Energy Drain* (7th)
Succor/*Succor* (7th)

Detect Evil, 1st Level: Same as wizard's spell; see page 46.

Know Alignment, 2nd level: Ravenloft insulates evil. As in the standard version of this spell, the target gets a saving throw. Even if it fails, the spell can detect only chaotic, neutral, or lawful alignment. The spell does not reveal evil or good alignment.

Animate Dead, 3rd level: This spell works almost too well in Ravenloft. The caster normally can animate a number of skeletons or zombies approximately equal to his level in hit dice. When priests cast this spell in Ravenloft, they animate twice the usual amount. (Use the regular formulas, but double the result.) The caster can

add as many hit dice to the monsters as he wants, as long as the total is no more than twice his own level. Keep in mind that the undead's hit dice affect their ability to be turned. Undead whose hit dice exceed the caster's level can save vs. spells to break free from the priest's control.

Cure Disease, 3rd level: The reverse of this spell, *Cause Disease,* requires the caster to make a Ravenloft powers check.

Feign Death, 3rd level: This spell requires the caster to make a Ravenloft powers check.

Negative Plane Protection, 3rd level: The demiplane of Ravenloft insulates undead from the influence of other planes. The attacking undead monster can save vs. death magic or take only 1d6 points of damage.

Remove Curse, 3rd level: This spell works poorly in Ravenloft. Here, its duration is limited rather than permanent. The target of this magic can save vs. spells to temporarily rid himself of a curse. The duration of relief is one turn per level of the spell caster. Curses are very powerful in Ravenloft (see the chapter on curses). The stronger the curse, the less likely it is that a mere spell can suspend it. Use the table below to find the saving throw modifier for the power of the curse.

The reverse of this spell, *Bestow Curse,* works as described, but it requires a Ravenloft powers check with the following modifiers.

Curse	Modifier
Embarrassing	0
Frustrating	−1
Troublesome	−2
Dangerous	−3
Lethal	−5

Speak With Dead, 3rd level: This spell functions normally, but requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Abjure, 4th level: Normally, this spell sends creatures from the outer planes back to their own dimension. Its chance of success is 50%, plus 5% for each difference in level between the caster and the target. If this spell succeeds in Ravenloft, the creature is sent to another random location in the demiplane.

Call Woodland Beings, 4th level: The fairy folk listed in the *Player's Handbook* do not inhabit any of the known domains in Ravenloft. Furthermore, the lord of the domain in which the spell is cast controls the spell's results. The lord can send any creature in his land to answer the summons. Of course, it will obey his instruction and not the caster's.

Reflecting Pool, 4th level: Instead of offering a window to another plane or grounded setting, the spell creates an image of swirling mists. The priest actually sees a specific location in the Mists of Ravenloft. There is a 10% chance that something horrid will appear briefly within the image while the priest is looking.

Commune, 5th level: This spell works normally for all priests who are devoted to gods of evil alignment. It does nothing for other priests. Deities of good or neutral alignment cannot be contacted with this spell.

Dispel Evil, 5th level: Normally, this spell can return creatures summoned by evil to their home plane. The dark and deadly creatures of Ravenloft cannot be dispatched so easily. The spell does remove evil enchantments, however.

Magic Font, 5th level: This spell has the same results as *Reflecting Pool* above. It reveals a random location in the Ravenloft Mists, with a 10% chance that a monster will wander into view.

Plane Shift, 5th level: This spell transports the character to a different domain within Ravenloft. It cannot help anyone or anything escape the demiplane's clutches.

Quest, 5th level: Normally a target who doesn't follow the quest suffers a −1 penalty to all saving throws. The penalties are cumulative over time. In Ravenloft, the caster can assign another punishment for not following the quest. The punishment cannot be too severe or life-threatening, but it must slowly worsen each day the quest is ignored. Likewise, following the quest should gradually cancel the punishment. For example, a character might shrink 10% in height every day he violates the quest (based on current measurements). Each day the character returns to the quest, he regains one day of shrinkage.

Raise Dead, 5th level: If the target of this spell fails his resurrection survival check, he becomes an undead creature—the type equal in hit dice to the target's former level. (Table 61, "Turning Undead," lists monsters by hit dice; see page 103 in the *Player's Handbook*.) Vampires are the most powerful creatures *raise dead* can create in this fashion. Vampires retain any ability they had as living characters. Their appearance may not change visibly; many vampires appear human. Casting this spell (or its reverse, slay living) requires a Ravenloft powers check.

True Seeing, 5th level: When priests discern alignment with this spell, they learn only law or chaos, not good or evil. (See *know alignment* above.) Otherwise the spell functions as described in the *Player's Handbook*, with the following clarifications:

- The spellcaster sees through illusions and apparitions. "Apparitions" does *not* mean ghosts or other intangible beings—they're real, just not physical. Undead creatures of this ilk do not appear differently under this spell. If they look like normal people, this spell usually does not change the caster's perception.
- Polymorphed, changed, or enchanted things become apparent. A lycanthrope in animal form is not considered polymorphed. Nor is a vampire or a similar creature with natural shape-changing abilities. As a general rule, if changing shape is part of the creature's nature, this spell does not reveal the change. "Polymorphed" must involve spellcasting, or the use of a spell-like ability.
- An "enchanted" creature is under some sort of controlling spell such as *charm* or *geas*. These spell effects are revealed by *true seeing*. Vampires and lycanthropes control animal troops through enchantment, but they do not control subservient creatures of their own kind this way. Master vampires and lycanthropes often dominate underlings with personality alone; otherwise it's a natural ability.

Conjure Fire Elemental, 6th level: A conjured elemental cannot leave Ravenloft by means of this spell, its reverse *dispel magic*, or any similar spell. It must find an escape from the demiplane just as the PCs do. The summoned creature is more difficult to control in Ravenloft. Upon arriving, it can save vs. spells with a −2 penalty; a successful roll means it can act freely. This does not mean the elemental automatically will attack the priest who summoned it, but that's a distinct possibility.

Find the Path, 6th level: This spell only functions within a domain; it cannot find locations outside it. If the domain is bordered by Mist, the caster can focus on the Mist to reach the border. The spell still provides an escape from *maze* spells and helps the caster bypass traps. As stated in the *Player's Handbook*, it does not predict or allow for the actions of hostile creatures.

Some exits from the Ravenloft demiplane are physical locations, such as portals. If such an exit is within the domain, this spell can guide the caster to it—provided the caster knows the nature of the exit and the exit is present when the spell is cast. In this case, the spell lasts only 1 round per level of the caster. Some portals appear only under specific conditions. If they are not present when the spell is cast, *find the path* has no effect.

Word of Recall, 6th level: This spell works normally with one exception: it cannot transport the character between planes.

Astral Spell, 7th level: This spell just plain doesn't work.

Conjure Earth Elemental, 7th level: Same as *Conjure Fire Elemental*. See above.

Gate, 7th level: The gate leads in, but not out; the summoned creature cannot leave Ravenloft automatically. Instead, the creature must find an exit just like any other being. This entrapment often infuriates the monster, provoking an attack on the caster and any companions. The caster ages five years and must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Holy Word, 7th level: Casters can only use this spell on their home plane. Hence, PCs cannot use it in Ravenloft, nor can they be driven from the demiplane by its reverse. Any native of Ravenloft *can* cast this spell. If a caster attempts to force creatures from the demiplane, however, the creatures are randomly transported to another location in Ravenloft. The creatures cannot come within sight of the caster for a full day.

Characters who cast an *unholy word* must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Reincarnation, 7th level: In Ravenloft this spell may "reincarnate" a person as an undead creature. The chance of this occurring is 1% per level of the caster. The person becomes a monster type whose hit dice equal the character's former experience level. (See the "Turning Undead" chart in Chapter III; it lists monsters by hit dice.) Like *raise dead* above, this spell cannot create undead more powerful than vampires. Vampires retain any abilities they had in life, and they may still look like normal people. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Restoration, 7th level: The reverse of this spell, *energy drain*, requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Resurrection, 7th level: See *raise dead* above; the effects are the same. The spell and its reverse, *destruction*, require a powers check.

Succor, 7th level: This spell cannot transport anyone or anything out of Ravenloft. Otherwise, it works as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Wizard Spells

A wizard who casts certain conjuration or summoning spells may find the results limited by circumstance. Animals and enchanted creatures only can be summoned if they exist in the domain occupied by the wizard. If the description for a given domain does not indicate which animals live there, you can assume the local fauna includes everything that would have a similar habitat in other realms.

Ravenloft is cut off from the other planes. That creates a problem for wizards who summon creatures from those planes. In general, a creature still responds, but it is often unfriendly and is rarely what the wizard summoned.

Certain spells, particularly some of the necromantic ones, are more effective in Ravenloft. Be warned though, that casting such spells with abandon can affect the caster. (See "Characters Who Choose Evil" in Chapter III.)

The table below lists common wizard spells with altered effects in Ravenloft. Spells immediately preceded by an asterisk require a Ravenloft powers check. A description of changes to each spell follows the table, supporting the text in the *Player's Handbook*.

Altered Wizard Spells

*Chill Touch (1st)
Detect Undead (1st)
Find Familiar (1st)
Detect Evil (2nd)
ESP (2nd)
*Spectral Hand (2nd)
*Feign Death (3rd)
Clairaudience (3rd)
Clairvoyance (3rd)
Hold Undead (3rd)
Monster Summoning I (3rd)
*Vampiric Touch (3rd)
*Contagion (4th)
*Enervation (4th)
Magic Mirror (4th)
Monster Summoning II (4th)
Remove Curse/**Betow Curse* (4th)
*Animate Dead (5th)
Conjure Elemental (5th)
Contact Other Plane (5th)
Dismissal (5th)
*Magic Jar (5th)
Monster Summoning III (5th)
*Summon Shadow (5th)
Teleport (5th)
Conjure Animals (6th)
*Death Spell (6th)
Ensnarement (6th)
Geas (6th)
Monster Summoning IV (6th)
*Reincarnation (6th)
True Seeing (6th)
Banishment (7th)
*Control Undead (7th)
*Finger of Death (7th)
Limited Wish (7th)
Monster Summoning V (7th)
Shadow Walk (7th)
Teleport Without Error (7th)
Monster Summoning VI (8th)
Astral Spell (9th)
*Energy Drain (9th)
*Gate (9th)
Monster Summoning VII (9th)
Succor/*Succor* (9th)
Wish (9th)

Chill Touch, 1st level: This spell is more deadly when cast in Ravenloft. If the victim fails his saving throw, the touch causes 2d4 points of damage, and drains 1 point of both Strength and Constitution. If the target saves vs. spells successfully, the touch still inflicts 1d4 damage points and drains 1 point of Strength. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Detect Undead, 1st level: In Ravenloft, each undead creature can make a saving throw vs. this spell. If four similar creatures or more are grouped together, they make a single roll with a −2 penalty for each creature present. A natural "20" always indicates a successful save. As stated in the *Player's Handbook*, the spell cannot penetrate stone walls over a foot thick—i.e., most castle walls.

Find Familiar, 1st level: Only wizards of evil alignment can find a familiar in Ravenloft. Lawful evil wizards have a 10% chance per level of the caster of summoning an imp. Wizards of chaotic evil alignment have a 10% chance of summoning a quasit.

Detect Evil, 2nd level: No one can detect evil magically in Ravenloft. As usual, the target of this spell gets a saving throw. Failure means the spell detects chaotic, neutral, or lawful alignment—never good or evil.

ESP, 2nd level: In Ravenloft, undead with a "low" Intelligence or better can choose to project their thoughts. Unlike undead in other realms, *ESP* can reveal such thoughts. Projected thoughts are usually safe, friendly, and reassuring, because that serves the creature best. A creature who is unaware or caught by surprise cannot project its thoughts. Wizards are not aware of this spell's altered effects when they cast it.

Spectral Hand, 2nd level: This necromantic spell lasts twice as long in Ravenloft. The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Feign Death, 3rd level: The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check. The spell is unchanged.

Clairaudience, 3rd level: According to the *Player's Handbook*, this spell allows the caster to hear noises in a "familiar" or "obvious" place. A familiar place is one the wizard has visited personally. Verbal descriptions and viewing through spells or pictures do not make a place completely familiar. If a wizard has this kind of partial information, the spell has a 50% chance of working. Roll once per location, failure being permanent until the wizard gathers significantly more information.

An "obvious" place is one directly connected to the scene before the caster. If the wizard sees a door, he can cast the spell on the other side of the door. He cannot cast it around the corner and through the door, however.

Clairaudience normally creates an invisible sensor that can be magically dispelled. In Ravenloft, the sensor is a ghostly ear of normal size. It is *visible*. If detected, the ear can be dispelled or the parties involved can adjust their speech to compensate.

This spell is limited to a single Mist-bound region, which may include more than one domain. The mists act as a planar boundary. The spell does not work in the mists themselves; they distort location and distance.

The caster is not immediately aware of the changes to this spell.

Clairvoyance, 3rd level: This spell is restricted like *clairaudience*. The formerly invisible sensor becomes a visible, ghostly eye of normal size—without the caster's knowledge. The spell is limited to a single Mist-bound area, and does not work in the Mists. A gaze attack on the sensor can affect the caster. For example, a vampire might charm a wizard who has cast a *clairvoyance* spell.

Hold Undead, 3rd level: Undead monsters strongly resist this type of magic in Ravenloft. All undead—even the mindless ones—can avoid its effects with a successful save vs. spells. Undead that are self-willed add a +2 bonus to their saving throw. The lord of any domain is completely immune to this spell.

Monster Summoning I, 3rd level: Only monsters native to the region can be summoned. Refer to the encounter tables for the locale to determine what shows up. Monsters resist control in Ravenloft, and they can make a save vs. spells with a −2 penalty to avoid the effects of

this spell. If the summoned monsters are minions of the local lord, the creatures still appear, but the lord retains control of them all.

Vampiric Touch, 3rd level: Ravenloft enhances the effects of this spell. For every die of damage inflicted, the victim loses 1 hit point permanently—unless a priest successfully performs a *restoration*. For example, a 7th-level wizard touches a warrior with this spell. The warrior suffers 3d6 points of damage, and loses 3 of these points permanently. Only a *restoration* spell can return these 3 hit points. The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Contagion, 4th level: The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check. The spell is unchanged.

Enervation, 4th level: This spell is quite deadly in Ravenloft. Each level drained from the victim also drains 1 hit point permanently. For example, if a succession of these spells causes a character to lose 3 levels, he also loses 3 hit points permanently. Only a *restoration* spell can bring back those lost points. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Magic Mirror, 4th level: Although it doesn't work in the mists themselves, the *magic mirror* can view a location within a single, Mist-bound region. The mirror still acts as a scrying device, but a ghostly mirror with the caster's face appears at the location seen by the caster. A gaze attack (see the DMG) can be made into this ghostly image, affecting the caster. The caster is not immediately aware of the changes to this spell.

Monster Summoning II, 4th level: See *monster summoning I* above. The same applies here.

Remove Curse, 4th level: See the 3rd level priest's spell by the same name.

Animate Dead, 5th level: See the 3rd level priest's spell above.

Conjure Elemental, 5th level: The dark powers of Ravenloft restrict access to the elemental planes. The elemental can arrive, but it cannot leave unless it finds a normal exit. In addition, there is a 20% chance that the spell will bring a Ravenloft elemental to the caster. All summoned creatures are more difficult to control in this demiplane. On the first round of summoning, the creature can save vs. spells with a −2 penalty; success means the creature avoids control. Otherwise the spell works as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Contact Other Plane, 5th level: This spell opens a conduit to the lord of the domain. The caster does not know this, only that he has contacted a powerful, malevolent force. Contact lasts 1 round for every 2 levels of the caster. The lord is not forced to answer truthfully, nor is he forced to answer at all. Role-play any conversation. No attacks can be made through the contact, but the lord discovers the caster's approximate location (within 2 miles). Unless he would clearly do so, there is a 50% chance the lord will dispatch his minions to seek out the wizard.

The base chance of insanity is 30%. Subtract 5% for every point of Intelligence over 15 the caster has.

Dismissal, 5th level: Such an easy exit from the demiplane of Ravenloft is not permitted. The creature can still save vs. spells to avoid dismissal, provided it does not want to leave. If the save fails, or the creature wishes to leave, there is a 50% chance that the spell will teleport the target to some random location in the demiplane. Otherwise, the spell has no effect in Ravenloft.

Magic Jar, 5th level: This spell undergoes a small but deadly change in Ravenloft. If the host's body is slain, the caster does not necessarily return to the *magic jar*. The caster must make a successful saving throw vs. death or be bound to the host's corpse. If the roll succeeds, the spells work normally. If it fails, the wizard becomes an undead monster occupying the host's body, which the DM controls completely.

Specifically, the following occurs when the caster becomes undead. The corpse of the host lies in peaceful death for a full day. Then if the corpse is still relatively whole, it is animated with the caster's life force. If it is not relatively whole, the wizard dies. "Relatively whole" usually means the head and torso are intact. The caster, when undead, retains the powers he had in life, excluding physical abilities. He assumes the physical abilities of his host's body. He does not retain powers antithetical to an undead state—healing touch, *plant growth*, or *protection from evil*, for example. (The DM's best judgement applies here.)

In addition, the caster receives the usual powers of an undead creature. He is immune to *sleep*, *charm* and other mind control spells, and he never needs sleep, food, drink, or even air. He is immune to cold-based damage. Depending on the hit dice of the host body, he may receive other powers as well; consult the table below.

Hit Dice	Special Power
4 or less	No additional power
5 to 7	Energy drain touch
8 to 11	Regenerate 1 hit point each round
11+	Fear aura 40'

The special powers above are cumulative. Hence, a 12 hit die monster would enjoy all three powers. The aura of fear automatically affects creatures with less than 4 hit dice. Those with 4 to 6 hit dice can make a saving throw.

The caster's original body also becomes an undead creature, which is under the control of the undead host. This creature is weaker than the one created from the host's body; it has only half as many hit dice as the caster had levels in life, to a maximum of 10 hit dice. The "Turning Undead" table in the *Player's Handbook* lists monster types by hit dice. For example, a 13th level wizard would become a 6 hit die monster. According to the table, a 6 hit die undead monster is a wraith. The DM can choose a different undead creature of the same hit die, if desired.

The *magic jar* spell undergoes another, important change. The life force of the host, contained in the magic jar, does not depart when the caster's own life force is bound to the host's body. Instead, the host's life force becomes trapped in the jar, held there by the powers of Ravenloft itself. The powers of this trapped life force are unknown. But it is said the force may fester and grow within its prison, attaining powers that allow it to reach out from the jar and

perhaps eventually escape. When the magic jar is destroyed, the life force within it is destroyed, too.

Monster Summoning III, 5th level: Same as *monster summoning I*; see above.

Summon Shadow, 5th level: Each shadow can make a saving throw vs. spells upon arriving, with a −2 penalty. If the roll succeeds, the shadow is not under the control of the caster. The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Teleport, 5th level: This spell cannot transport characters across the boundary of a domain, or out of the Ravenloft demiplane.

Conjure Animals, 6th level: Only animals native to the domain or region can be created. Otherwise the spells works normally.

Death Spell, 6th level: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check. After 3 days, if the corpses are relatively whole (head and torso mostly complete), there is a 10% chance they will become zombies. Each zombie will have half the hit dice of its former, mortal life. At the DM's discretion, unusually powerful personalities may become other types of undead.

Ensnarement, 6th level: This spell normally brings a creature from the outer planes to the caster, and ensnares it. According to the spell, the creature can leave after performing one service. Since Ravenloft does not allow visitors to escape so easily, the creature cannot leave the demiplane unless it finds a physical exit (portal).

In Ravenloft, this spell can sometimes bring a creature from within the demiplane itself. Instead of creating a gatelike opening in an outer plane, it may create the gate near the lord of the domain the spellcaster occupies. The lord can choose to send one of his minions in response to the spell. The percentage chance of this twist equals the level the caster.

It is more difficult to control a summoned creature in Ravenloft. The creature's base chance of escaping a warding circle doubles: a hand-drawn circle has a 40% base chance of failure, and inlaid or carved circles have a 20% base chance of failure. The creature never has less than a 5% chance of escaping.

Geas, 6th level: Like the *quest* spell, the *geas* normally involves a small cumulative punishment for each day the target does not pursue it. The target gets sick, and eventually dies. In Ravenloft, the caster can determine the exact punishment. See "*quest*" above for an example.

Monster Summoning IV, 6th level: Same as *monster summoning I*, see above.

Reincarnation, 6th level: Same as the 7th level priest's spell; see above. Requires a Ravenloft powers check.

True Seeing, 6th level: Same as the 5th level priest's spell; see above.

Banishment, 7th level: The dark powers of Ravenloft do not permit easy egress from the demiplane. Creatures targeted by this spell make their saving throw with a +4 bonus. Even if they fail the save, they are only teleported to a random location elsewhere in Ravenloft.

Control Undead, 7th level: In Ravenloft, all undead can make a saving throw to resist control—even those with 3 hit dice or less. Those with more than 3 hit dice add a +2 bonus to their roll. The lord of any domain is immune to this spell. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Finger of Death, 7th level: A small change occurs when this spell is cast in Ravenloft. After 3 days, the body automatically animates as a ju-ju zombie. If the caster is present when this happens, each zombie makes a saving throw vs. spells. Failure means the creature falls under the caster's control. Success means that it despises the caster and seeks to destroy him. If the caster is not present when a ju-ju zombie animates, the creature automatically escapes control, seeking the caster out and attempting to kill him. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Limited Wish, 7th level: See *wish* below.

Monster Summoning V, 7th level: Same as *monster summoning I*; see above.

Shadow Walk, 7th level: No one can escape Ravenloft by casting a simple spell like this.

Since the plane of Shadow appears to be strongly linked to the demiplane Ravenloft, this spell still enables the caster to walk from place to place as described in the *Player's Handbook*. But the caster seems tethered to Ravenloft demiplane, and finds himself unable to fully enter the plane of Shadow. He is held in the icy clutches of Ravenloft's dark powers, and they never let him stray more than arm's length from Ravenloft itself.

Teleport Without Error, 7th level: This spell works normally, except that it cannot transport the character out of Ravenloft or out of a domain whose borders have been magically sealed. Keep in mind that some areas of Ravenloft change, so that the teleporter might not be as familiar with the place as he believes.

Monster Summoning VI, 8th level: Same as *monster summoning I*; see above.

Astral Spell, 9th level: In Ravenloft this spell does nothing.

Energy Drain, 9th level: The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check. Otherwise the spell is unchanged.

Gate, 9th level: This spell works normally, with one restriction: the summoned creature is not allowed to return automatically. It must find a normal exit from the demiplane, just like any other being. This frequently is enough to provoke the creature to attack the caster and his friends. Beings of such power as are summoned by a *gate* spell do not appreciate being stuck in the Ravenloft demiplane. The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Monster Summoning VII, 9th level: Same as *monster summoning I*; see above.

Succor, 9th level: This spell cannot transport anyone or anything out of Ravenloft or out of a domain whose borders have been magically sealed; otherwise it works as described.

Wish, 9th level: The dark powers of Ravenloft grant the *wish*, but they always try to pervert the caster's intent. As a result, this spell rarely performs as desired when cast in Ravenloft. However, when evil characters wish for something dark and twisted, there is a 50% chance the wish will occur as asked; in this case, the wish is already perverted.

New Spells

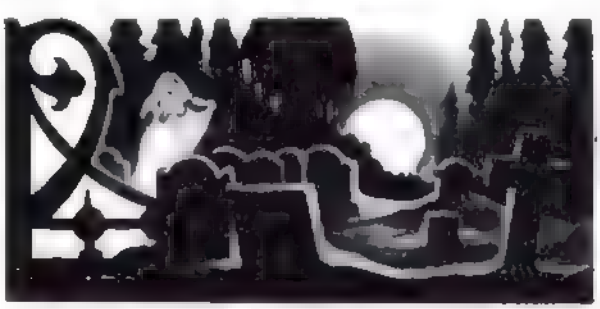
Feign Undead (necromancy)

Level: 4th Priest, 5th Wizard
Sphere: Necromancy
Range: 0
Components: V,M,S
Duration: 1 turn + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: Person touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell can make the caster or any willing character masquerade as a zombie. The target looks like a zombie, ceases to breathe, and feels no pain or emotion. He becomes immune to paralysis, poison, or draining attacks. In the case of poison, the character must make a saving throw when the spell expires. The immunity to pain does not protect the character from harm; he still takes damage normally.

The target's body looks just like an animated corpse—the skin color changes, and flesh shrinks to show his bones. His attire does not change, however; the character must attend to the state of his clothes himself. His joints become stiff and his movements jerky. As a zombie, he cannot attack, wield a weapon effectively, or cause damage points.

Any creature who sees this fake zombie assumes that he is real. Unless ordered to do so, real undead creatures won't attack him. If the person does something out of character, then anybody who sees him can probably deduce that he is not what he seems.



Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check. The material component for this spell is a bit of bone and dirt from a grave.

Divine Curse (abjuration)

Level: 6th priest
Sphere: All
Range: Special
Components: V
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: none

This spell creates a terrible and lasting curse, and can only be cast on someone who has performed a great wickedness—at least in the eyes of the caster. The victim of the curse can be of any alignment, although an evil alignment is most likely. The awful deed may have been unintentional, but it must have yielded horrible results for the caster or those who are close to him.

The priest is given the solemn responsibility of choosing the punishment. Wording is very important, and the player of the priest must record the exact phrasing for future reference. The curse is also subject to the deity's veto (DM's discretion). If the punishment is inappropriate, too harsh, or otherwise lacking (see the chapter on curses), the spell fails. In this case, the DM may guide the player to a curse that is acceptable. (DM's option.) Or, the DM may choose make the player "sweat it out" to see if his curse is accepted.

The priest becomes a vessel for the divine wrath he invokes. The caster must be in the presence of the evildoer and must announce the curse clearly to him such that he can hear it. Thereafter, the curse is in effect. *Divine curse* is a long-term spell and its effects are seldom immediate. Instead, a curse may develop over months or years.

Although a *divine curse* has long-lasting effects, it is not always permanent. The victim has two means of removing the curse. An *atonement* spell can lift the curse, provided the spell supplements a great, heroic deed. Such an action must be an appropriate counter to the original evil deed. Secondly, the *curse* itself may include an escape clause. Somewhere in the wording of the curse, there's a clue to lifting it. The DM should encourage such clauses. They needn't provide an easy escape, as illustrated by this sample curse: "You have walked upon the downtrodden, now shall each step you take be felt as a painful, damaging blow to your flesh. Should you walk barefoot to the summit of Mount Arabek between sunrise and sunset, then shall you be free of this curse". At first the escape clause seems deadly, if not impossible to fulfill. But a creative DM or player should be able to circumvent the obvious. For instance, the cursed character might pay someone to retrieve a slab of stone from the mountain's summit. Then he has only to walk a few feet to it. The DM decides which avenues constitute an escape.

The material components for this spell are a tiny silver gong and the priest's holy symbol.

Ancient Curse (abjuration)

Level: 7th priest
Sphere: All
Range: Special
Components: V
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: none

This spell works like the 6th level *divine curse* spell. However, the curse can affect the descendants of the targeted character, too. Here's an example of an *ancient curse*: "You and your seed shall wither at the touch of gold or silver unto the seventh generation." If the cause is great, the curse may worded to last indefinitely, throughout the victim's family tree.

If he provides an escape clause, the caster is often granted more powerful curses. (The DM should encourage players to incorporate these clauses into any curse.) In the example above, the curse might continue, "Should ye give back ten fold what was taken, then your children shall be saved."

Chapter X:

MAGICAL ITEMS IN RAVENLOFT

Like spells, magical items may work differently in Ravenloft—especially those involving divination, summoning, or necromancy. If a magical item exactly imitates a spell, the item will undergo the same changes the spell does; see the "Spells" chapter for details.

This chapter covers standard magical items in detail. It would be impossible to discuss every known magical item, in every known campaign world. The collection is far too vast, and it continues to grow. You may invent new items for your own campaign, incorporate items from other adventures, or even import items from other worlds. To handle magical items that are not discussed here, use the standard items as examples, and apply the guidelines below.

General Guidelines

Planar travel is rarely allowed in Ravenloft. If an item has any power related to planar travel, the power doesn't work. In many cases, the item sends the traveler to another location in Ravenloft; in others, the traveler goes nowhere.

Some domains do allow a particular device or spell to bridge the planes, however. Finding such an item is one of the most common ways to leave Ravenloft. At the DM's option, any single item related to planar travel could work properly—though it might work in only one domain. Adventure subplots (or plots) often involve discovering and obtaining the item necessary to escape this evil realm.

- Magical items cannot summon normal animals (wolves, cats, etc.) who do not dwell in the domain at hand. Animals or creatures summoned from other planes cannot go home the same way, and they won't be happy about it.
- Divination is weaker here. No one can identify evil or goodness with a magical item; only law or chaos.
- Items that are wholly evil or that spawn evil acts may require a Ravenloft powers check. This does not include cursed items or items that simply cause harm. To trigger the powers check, the owner must consciously choose to keep and use the item for evil purposes.
- Some evil items, particularly those based on necromancy, may actually work better in Ravenloft.

Common Items with Uncommon Effects

The items listed below work differently in Ravenloft. An asterisk means the item's use may require a Ravenloft powers check. A description of each magical item follows, supplementing the original text in other AD&D® game books.

Potion of Undead Control *
Oil of Etherealness
Scroll of Protection – Undead
Ring of Djinni Summoning
Ring of Vampiric Regeneration *
Rod of Rulership *
Staff of the Magi
Amulet of Life Protection
Amulet of the Planes
Amulet vs. Undead
Bag of Beans
Book of Vile Darkness *
Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals
Brazier Commanding Fire Elementals
Censer Commanding Air Elementals
Crystal Ball
Cubic Gate
Flask of Curses
Gem of Seeing
Helm of Telepathy
Horn of Valhalla
Libram of Ineffable Damnation *
Medallion of ESP
Medallion of Thought Projection
Mirror of Life Trapping *
Phylactery of Monstrous Attention
Sphere of Annihilation *
Stone Commanding Earth Elementals
Talisman of Ultimate Evil *
Well of Many Worlds
Plate Mail of Etherealness
Sword +2, Nine Lives Stealer *
Sword of Life Stealing *
Sword of the Planes

Potion of Undead Control: All undead are entitled to a saving throw to avoid the effects.

Undead that are not mindless get a +2 bonus to their saving throw. A lord of a domain automatically avoids being controlled. Keep in mind that intelligent undead may feign obedience to position themselves for attack. Controlling undead for personal gain puts the controller at risk. The user of this potion must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Oil of Etherealness: This oil makes the wearer insubstantial. In no case can he walk the ethereal plane and escape from Ravenloft.

Scroll of Protection — Undead: Undead are more difficult to control in Ravenloft. The scroll's effects last only 5d8 rounds and restrain only 20 hit dice of undead.

Ring of Djinni Summoning: The djinni appears, and serves the wearer once. After that service, the djinni tries to return to its own plane—and cannot. This is a violation of the pact of the ring; the djinni is freed. If its former master was kind and reasonable, the djinni leaves to find its own exit from the demiplane. If its former master was cruel and harsh, the djinni attacks him.

Ring of Vampiric Regeneration: Undead do not provide healing hit points to the wearer. Instead, they send negative plane energy through the channel created by the ring, inflicting as much damage as they would otherwise have healed. The undead monsters still take normal damage.

Each use of this ring requires a Ravenloft powers check, to a maximum of one check per week. (The ring can be used more often, however.)

Rod of Rulership: Anyone controlling undead or extremely evil creatures for personal gain is at risk. In this case, the user of the rod must make Ravenloft powers check.

Staff of the Magi: The staff is incapable of planar travel while in Ravenloft. Attempts to use it for planar travel do not expend any charges.

Amulet of Life Protection: As long as the amulet is in Ravenloft, a captured psyche cannot leave the demiplane. If the amulet is removed from Ravenloft, the psyche can then depart.

Amulet of the Planes: This device simply does not work in Ravenloft.

Amulet vs. Undead: In Ravenloft, undead are more difficult to control. The amulet works one level below its usual capacity while in this demiplane. (Turning undead also works differently in Ravenloft; see "Priests" under "Characters in Ravenloft.")

Bag of Beans: Each bean has a 20% chance of "sprouting" a Ravenloft encounter.

Book of Vile Darkness: The reading of this book requires a Ravenloft powers check. When the week-long reading is complete, the evil priest gains just enough XPs to rise two levels—not the paltry half-level increase granted in other realms. The priest still gains 1 point of Wisdom. Characters of good alignment suffer a curse if their save vs. spell (see the DMG) succeeds. In Ravenloft, curses can be deadly.

Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals: The elemental cannot return to its native plane unless it finds a normal escape route from Ravenloft. If the elemental is freed somehow from control, it attacks the character who summoned it.

Brazier of Commanding Fire Elementals: See *Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals.*

Censer of Commanding Air Elementals: See *Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals.*

Crystal Balls: Ravenloft's lords are so much a part of the demiplane that the crystal ball cannot distinguish them from the fabric of the land itself. Other changes to the crystal ball are covered under the *clairvoyance* spell description and the entries for other imitative spells.

Cubic Gate: This device does not function in Ravenloft.

Flask of Curses: In Ravenloft, this flask can confer more horrid curses on the person who opens it. Consult the following table to determine the strength of the curse. Chapter VI will help you flesh out the details.

d10	Strength of the Curse
1-3	Embarrassing
4-5	Frustrating
6-7	Troublesome
8-9	Dangerous
10	Lethal

Gem of Seeing: Consult the *true seeing* spell in Chapter IX; the same changes apply.

Helm of Telepathy: In Ravenloft, undead with a low Intelligence or better can deliberately project thoughts, which a mind-reading character can detect. Usually, the creatures send a false, reassuring message. Undead cannot project thoughts when surprised or caught unaware.

Horn of Valhalla: As usual, the hornblower summons berserkers from Valhalla, who fight for him. In Ravenloft, however, the berserkers break free of the enchantment after 6 turns. They cannot return to Valhalla unless they find a normal escape. The berserkers are never pleased about the summons. But if they have battled for a "worthy" cause, the newly freed fighters will not attack the hornblower or his companions. Instead, they simply will leave as a group, in search of route home. If they have been ill used, or forced to act in manner they find distasteful, the berserkers will attack the group.

When the hornblower and his companions leave Ravenloft, they still may have to answer for their actions. For each berserker summoned, there is a 1% cumulative chance that a greater power from Valhalla will appear before them. That power demands they justify their actions. He condemns them for manipulating the berserkers and causing their entrapment in Ravenloft. The characters must make reparations to the greater power, or suffer the consequences.

For every 25 fighters called, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the greater power appears to the wielder in Ravenloft. The greater powers are not bound by the laws of Ravenloft. It claims its fighters, takes the horn and vanishes back to Valhalla. If the fighters were ill used, it may even punish the wielder of the horn.

Libram of Ineffable Damnation: Evil characters who read this vile book in Ravenloft gain just enough XPs to rise two levels. Good characters who read the book become the victims of dangerous curse. (See "Curses" in Chapter VI.) Otherwise, nonevil characters suffer the usual effects, as described in the DMG. Reading the libram requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Medallion of ESP: See helm of telepathy above.

Medallion of Thought Projection: See helm of telepathy above.

Mirror of Life Trapping: Using this item to trap a life requires a Ravenloft powers check. Freeing a trapped individual does not require a check.

Phylactery of Monstrous Attention: When donned by a priest in Ravenloft, this arm wrapping alerts the lord of the domain to the priest's location (within a mile). Only monsters native to the domain can be summoned by the phylactery.

Sphere of Annihilation: Anyone who attempts to control this sphere captures the attention of the Ravenloft powers, and must make a powers check.

Stone of Controlling Earth Elementals: The elemental can only return to its native plane through one of Ravenloft's rare exits. If it somehow gains its freedom, the elemental attacks whomever summoned it.

Talisman of Ultimate Evil: Using this item requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Well of Many Worlds: In Ravenloft, this item looks like a simple, seamless piece of black cloth. It radiates strong magic, but does not function in the demiplane.

Plate Mail of Etherealness: The wearer can become insubstantial, but cannot walk the ethereal plane.

Sword +2, Nine Lives Stealer: Each time this sword steals a life, a Ravenloft powers check is required.

Sword of Life Stealing: The swordsman must make a powers check each time this weapon steals a life.

Sword of the Planes: Ravenloft is essentially

part of the ethereal plane; hence, this sword has a +4 bonus in the demiplane.

Intelligent Weapons

The ego of an evil, intelligent weapon rises 5 points in Ravenloft. (Weapons of good or neutral alignment are not affected.) If an evil weapon dominates its bearer, the weapon has a 50% chance of delivering itself to the lord of that domain. Each week a character wields an evil, intelligent sword, he must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Artifacts and Relics

Due to their unusual power and purpose, artifacts and relics may transcend the limitations of Ravenloft. At the DM's option, spells cast from an artifact or relic are unchanged by this demiplane (as are any spell-like abilities). These powerful items may even help characters escape from Ravenloft. An evil artifact may not want to leave, however. Furthermore, any character who owns an evil artifact or relic must make a Ravenloft powers check once a week.

Frequency of Treasure and Magic

Magic, especially in the form of magical items and devices, is less common in Ravenloft than in other realms. Few (if any) magical items are created here. Compared to other worlds, few people live in Ravenloft, and those who do have not lived in here long. As a result, you won't find piles of treasure lying about for the taking. Wealth is not much of a driving force here; survival is. This doesn't mean Ravenloft is void of greed, or that magical items don't exist in this demiplane—they're simply uncommon.

In Ravenloft, magical items don't lie about for no reason. The ordinary monster does not keep an item he cannot use. If he hoards treasure, he must have a logical and important reason to do so. Otherwise, the "cupboard" may be completely bare. Treasure doesn't accompany an encounter just because players expect it.

As a rule of thumb, cut in half the usual chance that a given type of treasure is present. If you make random die rolls to determine treasure, do so before play begins. If the results call for a magical item, that item must fit the encounter logically. If it doesn't, assume that nothing is there. Don't continue to roll for other types of treasure.

Although magical items may be in short supply, money is not. Characters can readily obtain payment for services rendered. (The folk usually aren't rich, but they give up what they have if the cause is good.) If the PCs rid a village of a powerful evil force, the village may reward the party. They may even offer one of those rare magical items they've been hiding—especially if that item will help the PCs destroy the village terror. Or, they may tell the PCs that such an item allegedly exists. The PCs—heroes that they are—would embark on the quest to find it.

In many campaign settings, the search for treasure drives the characters (and their players). This cannot always be the case in Ravenloft. Here, adventurers succeed by keeping their wits and skins; if they foil an evil plot, they've excelled. Survival, in most cases, is its own reward.

New Magical Items

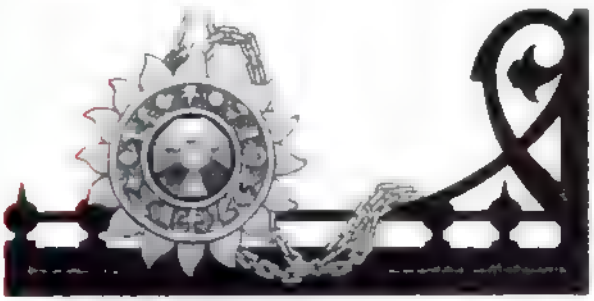
Adventurers won't discover many new magical items in Ravenloft; as noted above, the resources these items require are rare. Most magical items in this demiplane come from other worlds. A select few, however, appear to have burst into existence with the creation of a new domain, much as an afterbirth leaves the womb in pursuit of a newborn child. Ravenloft's dark powers have mysterious ways.

The following new items are indigenous to the Ravenloft demiplane.

Scroll of Return: A character must spend a full turn reading this scroll. If the reader is interrupted, he can start again at a later time without penalty. Once the reading is complete, the scroll bursts into flames. Glowing sparks drift toward the heavens, where evidently, they burn a hole through the fabric of space. The result is a portal about the size of a door, which remains open for one full turn. The door leads into the prime material plane. The exact location is another question; it appears to be random.

Holy Symbol of Ravenkind: This ancient platinum medallion was once worn by the high priest of Castle Ravenloft in Barovia. The priest lived (and died) before Strahd made his pact with darkness and cursed the entire land. The medallion is a powerful holy symbol for lawful good.

The holy symbol is shaped like the sun, with a large crystal embedded in the center. Symbols of light and truth surround the crystal. When forcefully presented toward any undead creature, the medallion adds +2 to the priest's die roll to turn the creature. When presented against vampires, it flares with the light of the sun for 1-10 rounds. The medallion can only give off a burst of sunlight once a week.



The Apparatus*: This huge machine stands over 30 feet tall, and is 20 feet wide at the base. A glass globe, 15 feet high, rests upon a massive tripod made of wood and steel. The tripod lifts the globe over 15 feet from the floor. The globe encases a great, spinning ball of sulphur. A network of rings, made of cold-forged steel, tops the enormous glass sphere.

Two smaller globes, each the height of a man, are suspended below the large one. The pair is linked by a narrow glass neck, like an hourglass on its side. A 3-foot-wide trap door opens from the bottom of each smaller globe. A steel, tubular arch links each smaller globe to the mother sphere above.

A third, still smaller, series of globes rings the entire base of the tripod, linked together like a chain by thin glass tubes. A bewildering array of metal and glass—rods, wires, and plates—joins the circle of spheres to the two man-sized glass chambers.

Lightning energizes the apparatus. The steel rings on top focus electricity into the mother globe. To fully charge, the apparatus requires 12 lightning strikes within the span of 3 hours; over a longer period, the charge fades. The energy is converted into a magical force by the spinning ball of sulphur within the globe.

This contraption can perform a number of monstrous and misguided tasks. The first is a "transpossession." It can cause the exchange of minds, between two intelligent subjects—even an intelligent creature and a man. The subjects must stand in the man-sized glass changes. On the twelfth lightning strike, the psyches of the two individuals are exchanged. All mental abilities go with the psyche, all physical abilities stay with the body. Both subjects fall unconscious for 1-3 turns. Any attempt determine the alignment or true nature of a transposed subject fails. Spells such as *know alignment*, *detect evil* or *true seeing* act as if the subject had a truly neutral alignment.

The second function of this machine requires the *Rod of Rastinon*. When the rod is placed in the glass tube connecting the two man-sized chambers, a subject's personality can be split in two. An intelligent subject must stand in one of the man-sized globes. On the twelfth lightning strike, the psyche splits. In a flash, a duplicate of the subject appears in the adjacent chamber. Physically, they are almost twins. Mentally, they are unique. As of this writing, the split has involved only good and evil, separating the dark side from the light. Other divisions may be possible.

The "dark side" described above is a being of such evil that Ravenloft's dark powers will envelop him, granting him a lordship and a domain. They may also give him great powers, and transform him physically. He will immediately seek to destroy his other half, because only then will he be secure.

According to legend, the Apparatus can also rejoin the psyches it has divided. Both halves must occupy the globes, with the *Rod of Rastinon* in place. On the twelfth strike, their psyches will join, and the original subject will be restored. Theoretically, two normal subjects—each unique and whole—might be forced to share one body through this process. The stronger body would harbor the two psyches, while the weaker body would become a withered, empty shell.

Rod of Rastinon: This transforming crystal of wondrous power is the key to the *Apparatus*. To

date, no other use has been discovered. Without this rod, the apparatus can only exchange minds between bodies; it cannot split or rejoin a single psyche.

Unlike other magical rods, this is not a rod of charges. It is a crystal shaft 2 feet long and a half inch in diameter. Silver sparks occasionally flicker inside, quietly crackling.

If anyone deliberately tries to break the rod, the chance of success is 5% per round of effort. The secret of making the rod has been lost. According to legend, several were made, but only one has been recovered so far.

Soul Searcher Medallion: The medallion is actually a small crystal orb, which hangs from a plain silver chain like a pendant. The crystal enables the bearer to perceive the true psyche of a creature. When the bearer holds the medallion, and steadily concentrates upon it, the crystal expands until it is 2 feet in diameter. A character whose Strength is less than 16 must use both hands to hold the enlarged crystal aloft. The bearer can take no other actions while using the orb. If concentration is broken, the orb returns to its original size and weight.

When the bearer gazes into the orb, he sees motes of light swirl within it for 1d4 rounds. Then the orb clears. At this point, the bearer concentrates on examining any single individual within 60 feet. The device shows the user an image of the true nature of that creature. The orb acts as a *true seeing* spell, unhindered by the effects of the demiplane of Ravenloft. It reveals the true alignment, as well as any charms or curses, possessions, polymorphs, illusions, etc. The bearer learns the complete truth. This does not mean that he discovers the target's combat numbers or forms of attack. Rather, the medallion strips away any lies or misinformation the creature is able to project.

The pendant is very fragile. Any fall requires a save as if against a crushing blow. If the bearer wears it in combat, hit might be damaged. If his opponent rolls a natural 20 against him, the soul searcher medallion must make a save vs. crushing blow. If it is put into a protective container, it is not subject to these dangers.

Ring of Reversion: This ring appears to be a simple iron band with a blood red garnet. The band is inscribed with ancient runes. The ring enables the wearer to force a shapechanger or polymorphed creature to revert to its true, original form. The ring also can reverse the transpossession of psyches, *magic jar* spells, and spells with similar functions. Only a priest can use this ring. While wearing it, he must touch the ring to the body he wishes to affect. The target gets no saving throw.

If the target has been transpossessed (his mind is in a strange body, while another mind occupies his original body elsewhere), the other body must be within 50 miles—and it must be alive. Otherwise the ring has no effect. The ring cannot change the condition of either body; damage and wounds stay the same. Each mind, and all its attendant problems or enchantments, simply returns "home."

A transpossessed creature can sense the power of the ring, even if he doesn't know the exact effects. If he prefers to remain in his current body, the creature or character feels great danger when the ring is near. He will flee or attack, depending on the situation and his personality. Conversely, a transpossessed creature who prefers his old body feels great hope in the presence of the ring. He will do anything to get the ring, even charging blindly and attacking if necessary. A transpossessed PC must make a Wisdom check to resist such bold, foolish action.

Amulet of the Beast: Two versions of the amulet exist: one made of silver, the other of ivory. Both show the image of a wild, wolflike beast, which is bonded in chains. Each amulet is round, and has a small hole at the top for threading a cord or chain.

The silver amulet functions only when worn by a lycanthrope. As long as the creature carries the amulet somewhere on his person, his lycanthropy is suppressed. Even a true lycanthrope cannot change shape while holding this silver amulet. No magical force prevents the item's removal, but the owner may protect it from theft by other means.

The ivory amulet, when touched to a character, gives its victim the symptoms of lycanthropy. (It has no effect on creatures who are already lycanthropes.) Most ivory amulets produce "werewolves," but a given amulet could mimic any form of the disease. The amulet is magically attached to its owner until a *remove curse* spell is cast. Even then, the victim must save vs. spells

successfully to be free of the amulet. Not every victim desires such freedom, however. When the amulet is gone, so are the symptoms of lycanthropy.

Sword of Arak*: Evil drow wizards created this sword, and no human was ever meant to hold it. The drow have lost the sword, however, and as of this writing, no one knows its current location.

To any physical and magical examination, the item appears to be a *sword of sharpness +2*. Indeed, it performs as one. But the sword also carries an evil curse—a horrid thirst for blood. Once a day, it must kill or help to kill a creature no smaller than a large dog. The sword is not required to deal the fatal blow, but blood must spill from the wound of the blade, and the victim must die no more than an hour after those first drops flowed.

Each day the sword's thirst is not quenched, its owner suffers. He loses 1 point from each of his mental attributes (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) and gains 1 point in each of his physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution). After the first such adjustment, the owner becomes so fond of the blade that he dares not let it from his sight. If someone forcibly separates him from the sword, he will do anything to regain it.

When one or more of the character's mental attributes drops to 3, the conversion is complete. He is now bestial—a monster that looks like an ogre. The DM runs the character. Usually, the beast will have superhuman physical abilities at this point, with scores above 18. Its only goal is to satisfy the blade's thirst for blood. The creature may embark on a mindless rampage or—if he has a shred of Intelligence left—begin a series of clever, fiendish murders.

If the sword is removed from the character's possession before a mental attribute drops to 3, he begins to recover gradually. Each day, he regains 1 point to each mental ability, and loses 1 from each inflated physical score. Until this process is complete, he still covets the sword, however, and is unable to resist the urge to pursue it.

Once the conversion is complete, even removing the sword will not cure the monster. Only powerful magic—or the monster's death—can remove the curse at this point. The *remove curse* spell may at first appear successful, but it can provide only temporary relief.

The Cat of Felkovic: This delicate jade statuette stands barely 1" high. It is a small, domestic cat with a contented expression, sitting on a jade base. The statuette closely resembles a *figurine of wondrous power*, though it is not one of the forms normally listed for that item.

When someone tosses the figurine to the ground and utters a command word, the cat becomes a smilodon. (A smilodon is a sabre toothed tiger: see "Cat" in the *Monstrous Compendium*.) The cat obeys whomever commanded it.

The cat is harmless as long as it's fed. Like many predators, it needs food once a day. If it is recalled before it has finished eating, the kill (or corpse) becomes part of the figurine, appearing in miniature beneath the cat's paw on the base. Later, the owner may notice that the carrion has vanished.

Each day the cat goes hungry, it becomes animate on its own, and hunts for food. It transforms itself at night, and attempts to do so when no one is watching. When it makes its first transformation under a new owner, it becomes only a house cat, satisfied by a bird or mouse. Each day that hunger triggers a subsequent transformation, it becomes a larger, more ferocious cat. (See below.) It hunts and kills the easiest and most appropriate prey—which eventually may be its owner.

When hunger has animated the cat, the owner cannot control it. In fact, it is 100% immune to any spell or spell effect. Only magical weapons can harm it.

Cat type	Hit dice
House cat	1
Giant lynx	2+2
Cheetah, mountain lion or leopard	3, 3+1 or 3+2
Jaguar	4+1
Lion or tiger	5+2 or 5+5
Spotted lion	6+2
Smilodon	7+2

Chapter XI:
LANDS OF THE CORE

This chapter describes the region known as the "Core," Ravenloft's continent of discontent. It's pictured on one of the large color maps in this boxed set. You may want to refer to the map as you read.

Overview

At this writing, the Core includes 26 domains. At the heart lies Barovia, allegedly the first domain to take shape. From that point, the others have spread, like a great stain which continues to grow even now. To the north lies Darkon, the largest domain. Valachan and Bluetspur reach farthest south. The Nightmare Lands stretch along the eastern border. To the west lies the Sea of Sorrows. Billowing vapors—the Ravenloft Mists—surround the entire continent. What lies beyond them remains unknown.

The Balinok Mountains cut through the center of the Core from north to south. Their spectacular peaks soar to extremes of nearly 10,000 feet. Like Death's scythe, the range curves eastward just below Darkon, disappearing into the Mists. The lands west of the Balinoks, sandwiched between the mountains and the Misty Border, are covered with thick forest. Lands east of the peaks, such as Nova Vaasa and the Hazlani foothills, are mostly barren or grassy. Only two major roads cross the Balinoks. One travels through Barovia, the other through Tepest. Other crossings are possible but treacherous.

Three major rivers drain the lands north and west of the Balinoks: the Vuchar, the Musarde, and the Arden. The Vuchar travels from east to west across the northern plains of Darkon. The river's source lies beyond the Mists. As the Vuchar approaches Darkon's western shore, it turns south, meandering along the tip of Falkovnia. At Dementlieu, the Vuchar flows northeast to join the Musarde. The two rivers enter Lamordia as one, then split like fingers on a hand to cross the Lamordian delta, until their waters spill into the sea.

The river Musarde travels far to reach its juncture with the Vuchar. It flows from the southern Mists into Valachan, carving a lush valley as it runs north through the wild green hills of the southwestern domains. Spidery streams descend from the Balinoks to nourish it. One major tributary, the Luna, has its source in Barovia.

The River Arden flows out of the Mists near Mordent. According to gypsy lore, its true source is not in the Misty Border, but in the southern domain of Valachan. From there, it travels into the fog, following an ethereal course until it at last reenters the Core at Mordent's southern border. No creature alive or undead has ever followed this course, though some have tried. Still, the gypsies claim that a single rose, when cast into the Valachani Arden, will sometimes find its way into Mordent. At any rate, the two rivers share the same name.

The Misty Border: The Mists of Ravenloft surround the entire Core, forming an embrace from which nothing, and no one, readily can escape. A person who steps into the Mists from within the demiplane finds himself hopelessly misguided. Upon leaving the Mists, he finds himself in Ravenloft once more. The vapor seems to rise directly from the land and its seas, though ordinary water vapor it is not. At times the Mists surround an individual domain. They always surround the Core. (See Chapter II, "The Demiplane of Dread" for more details on travel in the Mists.)

The Domains in Detail

The text below describes each domain in the Core, in alphabetical order. You'll find basic information about each domain's lord, geography, and natives, as well as tables for random encounters. To learn about general traits of the entire demiplane, refer to Chapter II.

Cities and Villages: Whenever a population for a city or village is provided, the number includes only folk who live within its proper boundaries. As a rule, an equal number of people reside in the immediate area (usually they're farmers and peasants).

Any village housing fewer than 1,000 people may not be listed on the maps in this boxed set. However, the remote areas of a domain usually include inhabitants, even when the map doesn't show it. They gather in small, uncharted villages or occupy secluded homesteads.

Roads: The big color maps show only major roads—those which are heavily traveled. Most major roads are not paved, but local residents try

to keep them in good repair. Many crude paths and rugged dirt roads crisscross the domains, leading to tiny villages and remote homesteads. The maps do not include them.

Closing the Borders: The borders of each domain represent a physical as well as a political boundary. Usually the borders are open, and are indistinguishable to the average traveler. At a moment's notice, however, the borders may close, preventing any traveler from escaping. The method of closing varies from domain to domain. In some, the Mists of Ravenloft arise from the soil; anyone who enters them simply finds himself back in the domain. In others, the land sprouts a wall of skulls, or gives rise to an impenetrable wall of fire.

The borders close because the lord wants them to close, and the land grants his wish. A sealed border usually means that someone has attracted the lord's attention. Because of the strange occurrences there, most natives avoid settling too close to any domain's border.

Encounters: The random encounter table for each domain lists monsters that lurk in that area. The monsters are divided into two "frequencies of occurrence": common and rare. The AD&D® 2nd Edition rules include more categories, but these two suffice here. You may divide the lists further if you'd like.

As DM, you also may wish to run an encounter with a monster that's not listed in the table. Other monsters may well live in Ravenloft or enter through the Mists, but you should try to restrict yourself to creatures that fit the flavor of this demiplane. Spectres, shadows, hell hounds, skeletons, ghosts—these are in keeping with the Gothic tradition. You'll find a list of appropriate creatures on the back of one of the cardstock sheets in this box.

An encounter with a small animal is possible in any domain. If you decide to run one, make the most of it. A confrontation with a rabbit for its own sake is boring. But done well, an encounter with a small animal can help build suspense. For example, tell players their characters hear something scurrying softly through the brush. Each time they investigate, the creature eludes them, until they believe something horrible is on their trail. When you finally reveal the creature as a harmless bunny, the characters will enjoy a moment of relief. That's when the real horror should appear—such as a werewolf leaping over the rabbit to attack them.

The small animals listed below can appear in any domain, at virtually any time. You also may substitute another species of your choice.

Small Animals (1d12)

1	1-3 Snakes
2	1-6 Chipmunks
3	1-2 Ferrets
4	1-2 Foxes
5	1-2 Hedgehogs
6	1-12 Monkeys
7	1-8 Opossums
8	1-8 Wild pigs
9	1-12 Rabbits
10	1-4 Raccoons
11	1-6 Squirrels
12	1-2 Woodchucks

Arak

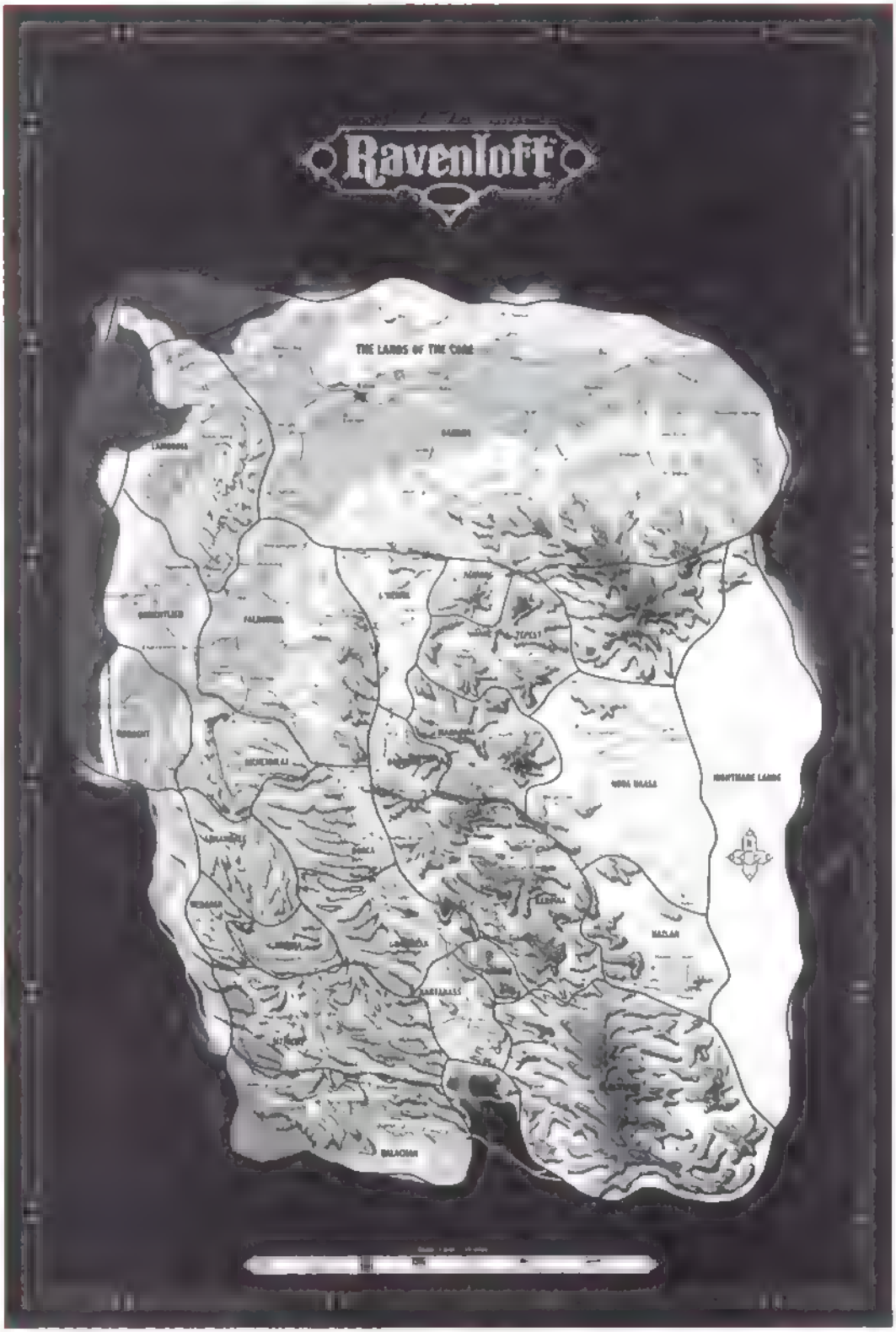
The Lord and the Law: No one outside this domain knows who rules it. The natives of surrounding lands know that Arak's surface is uninhabited, and that a small kingdom of drow elves lies deep underground. Foreigners assume that one of the drow is lord.

The Land: Arak surrounds the twin peaks of Mount Nyid and Mount Nirka, in the northeastern hook of the Balinoks. Darkon lies to the north, while Nova Vaasa lies to the south. Tepest is west. The Nightmare Lands are nestled against the eastern border.

Arak is a desolate, windswept territory. Not a single tree grows in this domain—only low shrubs, tall grasses and spikes, and other hardy plants. The foliage conceals the mouths of caverns, which descend into the drow kingdom.

Closing the Borders: When the land is sealed, unscalable slabs of granite rise like monoliths at the borders. A savage wind screams through the crannies in the rock. The wind forces travelers back into the domain and prevents any kind of flight.

The Folk: As of this writing, only the drow live in Arak. No visitor has ever entered their underground kingdom and returned to describe the experience.


Ravenloft
THE LANDS OF THE CORE

Encounters: Twice each day, and three times each night, there is a 25% chance of an encounter. Most above-ground encounters involve the drow. Their "Watchers" are posted high in the mountains to spot invaders. When night falls, the drow descend on visitors like a swarm, taking prisoners below the surface. A few monsters other than the drow also live underground.

Common	Rare
Spiders	Driders
Giant insects	Ettercaps
	Hell hounds

Arkandale

The Lord and the Law: Nathan Timothy the werewolf is Arkandale's lord. Ostensibly he is a wealthy river merchant plying his trade on the Musarde. He has strong ties with gypsies and other traders. His boat is the only one assured of safe travel across the domain, and the natives know it. They attribute this to wealth, luck, and savvy.

The Land: Arkandale's topography ripples with small, sharp hills, which are thickly forested. Wild game is abundant, especially wolves, and weasels prized for their rich pelts. The Musarde River has carved a valley across the center of the domain. A few scattered villages lie near its banks. The area around each village has been cleared for farming.

Closing the Borders: When Captain Timothy wants to seal Arkandale, a wall of dense vegetation 50 feet thick forms at the borders. It grows over and through the waterways. The green wall turns blades aside, and fire cannot burn it.

The Folk: Ordinary folk number only a few hundred in Arkandale. They live in small, sturdy wooden houses with thatched roofs. Despite the abundant game in the forests, they do not hunt much. A few are trappers, but most are peasants or artisans, who sell their goods to Timothy.

Arkandale's forests are thick with wolves who fear no men. Hence, only the boldest folk stray from the river valley. Elders speak of wolf gods and wolves that can walk upright.

Encounters: Roll for a random encounter once or twice each day; the chance is 25%. At night, roll four times.

Common	Rare
Werewolves	Goblins
Rats	Wolves
Snakes	Will o'wisps
Spiders	

Barovia

The Lord and the Law: Count Strahd Von Zarovich, master vampire, rules this land. The locals do not know he is a vampire, but are sure he has lived far longer than any man should. Strangely, they still believe he is human. They call him "the devil Strahd," but that refers to his personality, not his species.

Some lords do not openly rule their domains; the populace is completely ignorant of their power. Strahd Von Zarovich is not one of them. He is a cruel tyrant, whom the folk dare not disobey. Fortunately for them, Strahd rules from the shadows. He rarely appears in public, though rumors of his visits are common. The folk's daily lives do not concern him. So long as they produce maidens whose lily necks can hold his interest, he will not interfere with their dismal routines.

Strahd does not govern as would a king or prince. He makes very few formal commandments. He does not even collect regular taxes. That is for the few *boyars* (landholders) and *burgomasters* (mayors). It is they who tax the populace, and act as jailors for those unable to pay. But like the peasants, the boyars and the burgomasters bow to Strahd. He takes what he wants from them when he needs to take it—be it gold, labor, or life.

On rare occasions, Strahd has established laws. The most notable is the law stating that anyone who enters his castle uninvited will be put to death. Of course, many *invited* guests have suffered the same fate.

The Land: Barovia sits high in the Balinok mountains, near the center of the Core. Through the long winters into late spring, the peaks are capped with snow and ice. The two highest summits, Baratak and Ghakis, reach over 7,000 feet with a quick, deadly ascent. In summer the

snows slip from their exposed granite crags, but the crevices in the shadows stay icy year-round. Only Baratak and Ghakis are barren; the other twisting ridges are densely forested. The terrain is rough, with frequent outcroppings and small but sheer cliffs. Only the areas surrounding the Village of Barovia and the valley of Lake Zarovich make for easy travel.

Barovia's valleys begin to green in late spring. Glittering streams twist through the steep, spongy meadows, carrying the snowmelt which eventually feeds the Musarde River in distant domains. Aspen, fir, and pines fill the valleys. The Svalich woods surround Strahd's castle and the Village of Barovia, before the sea of trees bleeds into valleys farther east. The Tepurich Forest fills the western valleys.

Wildlife thrives in the woods—deer and rabbits especially. Rats, which replace the usual peeping rodents, are strangely abundant. Major predators include wolves, which thickly infest the forests, and small black bears. Ravens and hawks cross the skies by day. Songbirds flit through the forests. At night, owls and huge flocks of bats take wing.

The Old Svalich Road, one of the two regularly travelled routes through the Balinoks, crosses the Barovian domain. The road leads to two major settlements: Vallaki, between the two large peaks, and the Village of Barovia, over a pass farther east. Vallaki, population 1,500, lies on the southern shore of Lake Zarovich, Barovia's largest lake. Its inhabitants are mostly fishermen. An equal number of farmers and herders live in outlying plots around the lake. The farms are small affairs, most of them terraced on the hillside. Orchards of hardy Barovian apples form drifts of pink and white blossoms in spring. Plums, used to make the brandywine *tuika*, also grow in the valley.

East of Vallaki, the Old Svalich Road climbs a pass, switchbacking to slow the ascent. From the vantage of the pass, travelers can observe the Svalich Road as it leads to the Village of Barovia. Natives have nicknamed this route "the Devil's Descent." The Village of Barovia lies in a valley, surrounded by a collar of dense fog. (See "Strahd's Choking Fog" below.) Once inside the ring of fog, the road crosses the River Ivlis, then follows the river's course toward Barovia. Castle Ravenloft, Strahd's home, is perched on a 1000-foot precipice north of the road, brooding over the village.

Over 500 people inhabit the Village of Barovia. The buildings are well built timber-and-plaster constructions of two or three stories. Many are whitewashed. The eaves often are adorned with floral and geometric patterns in yellow and red. A few farmers work the soil surrounding the village, growing mainly potatoes, turnips, and cabbage. Shepherds live outside the ring of fog, tending their animals as best they can. At night, the villagers sometimes hear one of the poor beasts screaming as a wolf takes it down. The village has an evil reputation; no one with any goodness of heart wants to move there.

Strahd's Choking Fog: A ring of fog surrounds the Village of Barovia and Strahd's castle at all times. This fog, ranging from 200 to 500 feet thick, is one the domain's most deadly features. The vapor infuses itself around a character's vital organs, and acts as a neutralized poison. It does not harm its victims as long as they remain within the ring of fog. But characters who attempt to leave this small area, passing through the fog without the Count's express permission, begin to choke. Each hour they spend outside the ring of fog, they lose a point of Constitution. When victims reach 3 points, they fall unconscious. Each point lost below that requires a saving throw vs. death. Failure means a character dies. No known spells or magical items can prevent or otherwise affect the poison. If the final saving throw at 0 Constitution is successful, the character has fought off the poison. He recovers 1 point of Constitution a day, and when he reaches 3 points he becomes conscious.

Closing the Borders: The choking fog always surrounds the Village of Barovia. The domain's border is usually clear. However, Strahd can raise the choking fog at the border at any time, sealing his entire land.

The Folk: Barovians tend to be thick and stocky, with broad shoulders and sturdy hips. Most have brown or black hair, but occasionally a dark-eyed blonde is born. Men often wear droopy mustaches. Unmarried men usually have beards; older men tend to shave. The women wear their hair long and loose as a rule, though girls may braid it. Older women cover their heads with kerchiefs. Most Barovian women dress darkly at all times, as it is their custom to wear black for five years even when the most distant relative has died. The men, in contrast, wear white shirts

and embroidered sheepskin vests, and don a black arm band only when an immediate family member has passed away.

Barovians bear the burden of Strahd's yoke every day. As a result, they tend to be reserved, and surly or gruff. They keep to themselves and don't cause trouble, because troublemakers tend to end up dead—or worse.

Barovians dread the night. Before the sun sets, all natives are in their homes, with every entry barred and sealed. (Only the most horrid mishap would prevent a native from taking shelter by night.) Neither pitiful begging nor chilling cries of agony will open Barovian doors after nightfall. (If a door does open, you had best beware of your host.) The folk do not emerge from their homes until the ball of the sun has cleared the mountains to the east.

Except when conducting a funeral, Barovians do not frequent their churches. The people feel that their gods have abandoned them. The continuing evil of their tyrant lord and his routine slayings have led them to this belief. Each village does have a temple or church, but it usually lies in disrepair. Smaller villages may not even have a proper priest.

Occasionally a young couple filled with the optimism of new love will arrange a church wedding with a gay and boisterous procession. That only occurs in the smaller villages. Gone are the days when families advertised the availability of a girl for marriage by hanging a wreath of wildflowers on the door. The girls usually disappeared.

Barovians speak Balok, a language full of unusual consonant combinations. There is a 20% chance per individual that they speak a language player characters understand. For large groups of over a dozen, PCs have a 90% chance of finding someone who speaks a common tongue.

Strahd allows the gypsies great freedom in Barovia. They offer him information about Barovia and the rest of the demiplane. In exchange, he grants them safety within Barovia. Anyone who encounters a gypsy in this domain can be sure that Strahd will know of the meeting within a day.

The gypsies maintain a semi-permanent camp at the base of Castle Ravenloft, near a pool formed in the river Ivlis. Most Barovians consider them to be amoral thieves, but still pay to watch their shows and conduct trade with them. Gypsies are not allowed to loiter within town limits.

The gypsies have a potion that allows them to pass through the choking fog without Strahd's express permission. Strahd gave the formula to Madam Eva, who passed it to her descendants, who continue to pass it on to theirs. No gypsy will sell this secret formula. But for a fee of 10 gold pieces per person, the gypsies will transport merchants and travelers through the choking ring of fog. Just before entering the fog, all travelers imbibe the potion.

According to an old folktale, the gods hid a piece of the sun under Castle Ravenloft. If it can be recovered and returned to the gods, Barovia will be forgiven and its curse lifted. Most Barovians dismiss the legend entirely.

Encounters: During the day, there's a 20% chance of a random encounter. By night, the chance rises to 33%. That applies only to the villages and countryside. Intruders who spend time in or around Castle Ravenloft can expect to encounter virtually any form of undead except a lich.

Common	Rare
Strahd zombies	Crawling claws
Strahd skeletons	Cloakers
Skeletons	Hell hounds
Zombies	Invisible stalkers
Worg wolves	Jackalweres
Bats	Lycanthropes
Rats	Will 'o wisps
Small animals	Any other undead

Bluetspur

The Lord and the Law: The rulership of this domain is uncertain. Natives of surrounding lands know only that illithids (mind flayers) dwell beneath the mountains.

The Land: Bluetspur is an unearthly domain in the southeastern corner of the Core, where the Balinoks reach 10,000 feet. The Ravenloft Mists hug the southwestern and southern borders. The mountains here are sharply twisted and warped. Massive spurs of rock jut from the peaks at impossible angles, defying gravity. Stone arches bridge the summits, and corkscrew spires rise from the rock as if they were violently driven up through the mountain. At night, small, glowing lights move through the twisted rock. Similar lights are common above swamps, but there are

no swamp gasses to explain the phenomenon here.

Numerous streams drain the west side of the mountains, flowing across the foothills into Kartakass and the Mists. The streams carve deep, spectacular gorges through the rock, which expand into narrow canyons.

Vegetation is scarce in Bluetspur, even along the streams. A few fragile, scraggly evergreens grow from the crevices at lower elevations, but the timber line is quite low. Above 3,000 feet, only a few a patches of pale yellow grass survive.

Closing the Borders: The closure of this domain never has been witnessed—or at least, it never has been reported. No one knows how or if this might occur. Portals to the mind flayers' underground colony are rumored to seal with rock.

The Folk: No people live above ground.

Encounters: The mind flayers appear at the surface only occasionally. If encountered, they will attempt to subdue the visitors and add them to a slave pool. Otherwise, no encounters occur above ground; not even small animals live in this barren domain.

Each night spent here brings horrid dreams. The dreamer imagines dark, foul creatures slinking out from the rock and devouring all that is good. A horror check is required when the character awakes.

Borca

The Lord and the Law: The lord of Borca may be female, but she's no lady. Ivana Boritsi, poisoner extraordinaire, is mistress of this domain. The natives call her the "Black Widow," because loving her is a fatal affliction. Years ago, when a lover was unfaithful, she infected his body with a poison. In time, the poison killed Ivana's rival. Alas, it also eliminated her lover. According to Borcan lore, Ivana still harbors this poison in her body. Like the carrier of a disease, she herself is immune to its effects, but anyone who samples her passion may die. In Borca, a mother's greatest fear is that Ivana will fancy her handsome young son and literally love him to death.

Ivana wrested control of Borca from her mother Camille in 716. Like her mother before her, Ivana is known for her excesses. She owns Borca. Everyone else simply rents. Her rent collectors (police) include 1st level warriors, equipped with leather armor and polearms.

The Land: Borca is a small land in the green, rugged valleys east of Barovia. Vegetation grows wild and lush. In spring and summer, drifts of wildflowers blanket the hillsides. Barovia's snowcapped peaks, Mt. Ghakis and Mt. Baratak, loom on the eastern horizon, sometimes flanking the rising sun.

Borca has two settlements of noteworthy size: Levkarest, population 8,500; and Sturben, population 2,000. The Boritsis built their opulent estates near Levkarest. The area boasts several hot springs, in which the public is free to bathe. Ivana reserves the pools near her chateau for her use alone.

Closing the Borders: Any drink in Borca, even water from a stream, can become a poison that imprisons characters in this domain. Imported beverages act the same. When Ivana wants to seal Borca, a change takes place in the fabric of the land and air at the edge of her domain. The borders become a catalyst for the drink. When someone leaves Borca, the drink turns to lethal poison. The victim immediately feels feverish and woozy. He will die in a few turns unless he reenters the domain. The drink remains potent for 48 hours, and can be triggered as long as the borders are active.

The Folk: Most Borcans are poor. The aristocracy has taxed them into abject poverty.

Encounters: By day, there is a 25% chance of an encounter. By night, the chance is the same.

Common	Rare
Bats	Ghosts
Rats	Haunts
Snakes	Poltergeists
Spiders	Lycanthropes
Wolves	Will o'wisps
Bears	
Boars	

Darkon

The Lord and the Law: Azalin the lich rules Darkon as a king. He is the "iron fist in a velvet glove." His subjects know he is a wizard, but do not suspect that he's a lich. They know he has outlived any normal man, but still believe him to be human. Azalin takes pains to maintain this image.

Azalin sets the laws of his domain by decree. A baron governs each town and its surroundings, and is free to set minor regulations concerning that area. Each town has its own judicial system and a police force to enforce the baron's will. Most police officers are 2nd level warriors with studded leather armor, short swords, and shields. All bow to Azalin.

Azalin also maintains his own force of secret police, the Kargat. They can disregard any regional law and fear no reprisals. They are accountable only to the leaders of their force, who are accountable only to Azalin. The average Kargat grunt is a 5th level warrior. Most high-level Kargat are vampires. Were-creatures flesh out the middle ranks. Most adults know the Kargat exists, and sometimes can guess who is a member. But they are unaware of the Kargat's true, bestial nature.

The Land: As of this writing, Darkon is the largest domain in Ravenloft. It stretches across the northern edge of the entire Core, from the Misty Border in the east to the Sea of Sorrows in the west. The Balinoks loom on the southern horizon. To the north lies only Mist.

The Vuchar River flows east to west across Darkon, forming a broad valley spotted with backwaters and small ponds. Streams flow from the mountains to feed the river. Water is plentiful throughout Darkon, though its purity is sometimes in question.

Ravenloft's largest city, Il Aluk, is located on the Vuchar in Darkon. It has a population of 25,000. Compared to other domains, Darkon is littered with settlements. The table below lists their name, population, and racial mix. (Unlike most domains, Darkon is multiracial.) When a single race is given, it means roughly half the population is of that race. The remaining folk represent a mixture of races.

Village	Pop.	Race
Il Aluk	25,000	Mixed
Martira Bay	10,000	Humans
Karg	8,500	Humans
Viaki	8,000	Humans
Nartok	7,500	Humans
Rivalis	5,000	Halflings
Corvia	4,000	Dwarves
Tempe Falls	2,500	Dwarves
Neblus	2,000	Elves
Maykle	2,000	Humans
Mayvin	1,500	Gnomes
Delagia	1,500	Halflings
Nevuchar Springs	1,000	Elves
Sidnar	1,000	Elves

Closing the Borders: When Azalin wishes to seal Darkon, a wall of undead, 20 creatures deep, masses at the border.

The Folk: Darkon is a racial melting pot. Visitors are often dazzled by the confusion of races and social customs. Darkon's people come from many different worlds and regions, most of them outside Ravenloft. A traveler can find any mixture of eye color, hair, and skin tone here.

Demihumans are disliked and distrusted in other lands, but Darkon has no such bias. Members of a given race do tend to be friendlier toward their own kind, however, and group together. Each village usually has a predominant race.

The folk share one fundamental trait. After a few months (1d3) in Darkon, they lose all memory of their previous lives. Only the newcomers remember their ties to another realm. Eventually, all Darkonians believe that their family has lived in Darkon or neighboring domains for generations. Many who come alone to this land believe all their loved ones died in Darkon before them. As if to prove it, they adopt gravestones in a local cemetery and visit them faithfully. Since many Darkonians actually have been in Ravenloft for generations, it is impossible to know whose memories are false or true.

According to local legend, Darkon once was a realm of the dead, who were rudely displaced by the living. Eventually, the legend says, the dead will rise up to reclaim their land. Since this actually happened on several occasions—when the undead of Falkovnia invaded—the story is widely believed.

Encounters: Darkon is a melting pot of creatures as well as characters. This domain boasts an unusually wide variety of monsters. By day, the chance of a random encounter is 25%. Half of these daytime encounters are normal inhabitants of virtually any race. By night, the chance of an encounter is also 25%. In populated areas, half of these nighttime encounters are roving undead, which act as the eyes and ears of Azalin. Along the borders of Darkon, undead always patrol at night.

Common	Rare
Bats	Dopplegangers
Goblins	Griffons
Any undead	Hippogriff
Kobolds	Imp
Jermlaine	Invisible stalkers
Snakes	Lycanthropes
Spiders	Drow elves
Wolves	Leucrotta
	Sahuagin
	Shambling mound
	Hags

Dementlieu

The Lord and the Law: Dominic d'Honaire, the hypnotist, rules Dementlieu from behind the scenes. Publicly, he acts as advisor to the lord-governor, Marcel Guignol. The folk believe that Guignol rules Dementlieu. In reality, the lord-governor is d'Honaire's puppet.

Lord-governor Guignol writes laws and adjudicates important trials. Five advisors, headed by Dominic d'Honaire, counsel the lord-governor. D'Honaire controls the advisors as well as Guignol.

City militia help d'Honaire enforce the law. Most are 2nd level warriors equipped with studded leather armor, short swords, and whips.

The Land: Dementlieu is a coastal domain bordering the Sea of Sorrows. Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu's largest village, sits on the shore of Parnault Bay. Chateaufaux is a trade village near the eastern border.

Closing the Borders: D'Honaire can seal his domain with a mirage and the help of the land itself. Standing at the border, a character sees the lands of Dementlieu before and behind him. No matter which way he walks, he moves farther into the domain—the direction he chooses becomes the actual route toward the center of the land. In a forest, the character might not notice the effect until he emerges to find himself back where he started. At the coast, the Sea of Sorrows disappears from view.

The Folk: On the surface, life is normal and good in Dementlieu. The middle classes have food and shelter. Underneath, in the lower classes, lies discontent and fear. Most people treat the poor as slaves to be ordered about without regard to their own desires. Poverty, disease, crime, and even murder are common at this level of society.

Encounters: Dementlieu doesn't have many monsters. Some evil marine creatures have been known to prey upon the land dwellers, but it is not a common occurrence. There is a 25% chance of an encounter in the daytime, and an equal chance at night.

Common	Rare
Snakes	Kobolds
Spiders	Sahuagin
Deer	Doppleganger
	Goblins
	Kelpie
	Boar

Dorvinia

The Lord and the Law: Ivan Dilisnya rules Dorvinia. Like his distant cousin, Ivana Boritsi, Dilisnya is a poisoner. The folk believe he is mad.

Dorvinia has no formal police force or legal system. If you want muscle or justice, you have to buy it. Bribes, in fact, are required for every political favor, be it simple information, free passage on the roads, or keeping enough of your own crops to feed your children. Power means knowing the right people and serving them well—but not too well. "Middle management" continually changes as one faction wipes out another. No one dares lay a hand on Dilisnya, however. Those who have tried it have perished in their sleep.

The Land: Dorvinia is a small, mountainous domain north of Barovia and northeast of Borca.

Mt. Gries, a ragged peak encircled by a ring of mist, lies in the center of the land. Evergreen forests cloak the valleys.

Dorvinia boasts three riverside villages: Lechberg, Ilvin, and Vor Ziyden. The Dilisnya family estate occupies the Doldak heights just north of Lechberg. Lechberg has 5,500 people, Ilvin 4,000, and Vor Ziyden 1,000.

Closing the Borders: Dilisnya can seal his domain the same way his cousin, Ivana, seals Borca. Any drink in Dorvinia—even water from a stream—can become a poison that imprisons characters in this domain. Imported beverages are no exception. When Ivan wants to seal Dorvinia, a change takes place in the fabric of the land and air at the edge of his domain. The borders become a catalyst. When someone leaves Dorvinia, the fluid they have swallowed turns to lethal poison. The victim immediately feels feverish and woozy. He will die in a few turns unless he reenters the domain. The drink remains potent for 48 hours, and can be triggered as long as the borders are active.

The Folk: The people have a sullen and resigned air about them. Those on lower rungs of the social ladder can't afford to pay bribes and never will be allowed to know the right people.

Encounters: By day, there is a 25% chance of an encounter. By night, the chance is the same.

Common	Rare
Bats	Ghosts
Rats	Haunts
Snakes	Poltergeists
Spiders	Lycanthropes
Boars	Will o'wisps
Bears	
Great cats	

Falkovnia

The Lord and the Law: Vlad Drakov, mercenary king, is lord of Falkovnia. His brutal militia controls the domain. Not all are men of arms, however; bureaucrats receive military commissions. Falkovnia has no police force, only the army. (See "encounters" below.) Trials are conducted by military tribunal. Prisons are few and virtually empty, because punishment is swift and harsh.

Drakov demands at least one execution each night, at the dinner hour. He takes his meal while observing the prisoner's slow death. On special evenings, as many as 40 people are impaled on a tall, thick stake for his enjoyment. Occasionally he calls in an orchestra to accompany their screams. If Ravenloft is a prison for the damned, few deserve to be here more than Drakov.

The Land: Falkovnia lies in the northwestern quarter of the Core, just south of Darkon and east of Dementlieu. Small farms surround the settled areas. Wheat is their principal crop. Forests cover the rest of the domain. The roads are wide, well maintained, and well suited to moving troops.

Lekar, Ravenloft's second largest settlement, lies on the east side of Falkovnia. Ravenloft has only a few walled cities; Lekar is one. Over 15,000 people live within the city's walls, and nearly a quarter of them are soldiers. The city's location and the domain's excellent roads make the city a natural center of trade. Merchants fill the streets, handling wares from all the bordering lands: Darkon, Lamordia, Dementlieu, Mordent, Richemulot, Borca, Dorvinia, and G'Henna. As the traders bustle past, beggars glean what they can. They crouch in every doorway, pleading, arms reaching up to those who walk by. Many beggars, crippled by the soldiers, cannot rise to stand. Most of Lekar's citizens live in squalor. The twisting alleys in the laborers' quarter are filled with sewage, mud, and dung.

Falkovnia has three other sizeable towns, each with some degree of fortification. Stangengrad is perched on the northern border, near Darkon. It is home to 6,500 people. Another 5,000 Falkovnians live in Silbervas, on the shores of Lake Kriegvogel. Aerie, a village on the southern border, has a population of 2,000.

Forests blanket most of this domain. Falkovnian timber is towering and black, unlike the trees in any other region. The dense wood is extremely difficult to fell, and clearing roads makes young men old before 30. Locals call these trees *Vigila Dimorta*, or "sentries of death." In eastern Falkovnia, where the Balinoks thrust toward the heavens, many of the trees have died. The bark and leaves are gone, but the naked core still stands—bleached almost white, like driftwood. According to legend, one tree dies for

every person Drakov executes. Some claim that the tree ignites, and the flames burn away the bark.

Closing the Border: The land does not close at Drakov's will, and he has no magical means to accomplish it. To seal the borders, Drakov orders his troops to patrol them. Word of the closure spreads quickly among the folk, along with a warning to travelers. Those caught trying to escape are killed on sight.

The Folk: Falkovnians are a downtrodden lot—overtaxed, overworked, and terrorized by Drakov's soldiers. Every child is branded on the forehead with the sign of a hawk, Drakov's mark, to make their allegiance clear. The folk despise Drakov, but dare not curse him in public. They haven't the strength to overthrow him. Escape to another domain is forbidden to all but a few; only foreigners can cross the borders freely.

In the cities and towns, people wear drab clothing. Even foreigners adhere to this custom, because no one wants to stand out from the crowd. To attract notice is to put your life in danger. In more remote areas, life is still hard, but Drakov's squads are less oppressive.

Falkovnia is no place for demihumans. Drakov has declared them state property, and enslaves them like chattel. He encourages intermarriage, but the folk forbid it. Children with only one human parent are claimed by the state at birth.

Soldiers represent the highest class of Falkovnian citizens. No person can aspire to a higher status. Only humans can be soldiers. Falkovnia's elite are all military men, who are fiercely loyal to Drakov. Officers pay no taxes, travel without restriction, and enjoy many other privileges. Only soldiers can carry weapons. Citizens who arm themselves have committed a capital offense for which their entire family must suffer.

Encounters: During daylight, there is a 50% chance of an encounter. The chance is the same at night. Falkovnia hosts very few undead; the living are horrid enough. Near populated areas, half of all encounters are with soldiers. Most soliders are 3rd level warriors equipped with scale mail, spears, and shields. Elite fighting men are 5th level warriors equipped with banded mail, swords, or polearms.

Common	Rare
Boar	Hippogriffs
Wolves	Kobolds
Griffons	Jermlaine
Birds of prey	Lycanthropes
Deer	Satyr
	Will o'wisps
	Bears

Forlorn

The Lord and the Law: A ghost in Castle Tristenoira rules this land. The creature's name is unknown.

The Land: Forlorn is one of the Core's smallest domains. It is nestled between Barovia and Kartakass in the Balinok Mountains. The land is forested and lush, but few normal animals live here. There are no villages in Forlorn.

In a narrow, twisting valley lies the Lake of Red Tears. Red granite cliffs surround the lake, reflecting from the water as the sun sinks low every evening. A landslide formed the lake by merging several smaller pools into one. Black, barren fir trees, which once stood proudly on the mountainside, now emerge from the surface like skeletons.

Closing the Borders: According to local lore, the borders of this domain have never closed. The castle, however, is not so easy to escape.

The Folk: No one lives in Forlorn for long, except perhaps a hermit or two. The castle is abandoned and in poor repair.

Encounters: Only an occasional wolf will cross a traveler's path. Encounters in the castle are another matter.

G'Henna

The Lord and the Law: Yagno Petrovna, high priest of the imaginary beast-god Zhakata, rules G'Henna. He is both the spiritual and the political leader of the domain. The priesthood controls most aspects of society.

Criminals—those Yagno deems displeasing to Zhakata—are turned into mongrelmen. Yagno performs a ceremony on the high towers of his cathedral. He strips his victims of their human dignity, which is distilled into great clouds of

glittering dust. As the winds carry the dust away, all that remains of the victim is a mongrelman and an outcast. When the infraction is especially severe, Yagno's henchmen toss the mongrel from the tower. To this date, no foreigner has suffered this atrocious transformation. Perhaps Yagno lacks to power to do it—no one is sure.

The Land: Although richly forested domains surround it, G'Henna's land is rocky, cold, and dry. The peasants struggle to grow crops of any kind, and the herd animals continually roam in search of adequate grazing. In winter, many of the animals starve.

Several rivers flow from the Balinoks across G'Henna. In spring, the waters flood the banks. In other months, only a thin, murky stream winds through the center of the dry beds. Trees grow along the rivers, but in the Outland, G'Henna's rugged wilderness, almost nothing but scrub survives.

The principal city in G'Henna is Zhukar, home of 10,000 people. It is located near the heart of the domain, in the Balinok foothills. Buildings of worship dot the center of the city. Yagno's grand cathedral towers above them all.

Loyal citizens think of Yagno's mongrelmen as animals. The creatures' own families treat them no better than curs—or had better not, lest they suffer the same horrid transformation. As a result, most mongrels flee to the Outland, residing in caves among the rocks, living as best they can. At night, travelers often can spot their campfires and hear their eerie songs of lament.

Travelers in G'Henna frequently encounter dust storms, which force them to take shelter. Mongrelmen never shy from these tempests. According to them, the winds carry their own lost dignity. When the storms die and the sun begins to set, the skies are aflame with color.

Closing the Borders: When Yagno wants to seal his domain, a wall of jeering animal skulls appears before any character within 100 feet of the border. The wall extends into the heavens. No amount of magic or muscle can move it. As soon as the character heads back into G'Henna, the wall disappears.

The Folk: G'Hennan natives are pale and thin. Most have sparse black hair, which grows in clumps. The men wear beards if they can, using wax to twist them into a single long strand. Esteemed brethren of the church wear garish colors, particularly red. Peasants wear rags.

All aspects of G'Hennan life revolve around the worship of Zhakata. Worshipping this god means that some family member must starve. All food that's grown or imported must go to the church, which offers the food to Zhakata. The leftovers are doled out by the priests, determining who shall feast and who shall famish. Priests are always well fed. Starvation is an honorable death, because it proves one's devotion to Zhakata.

A typical home is filled with religious artifacts. The guesting cup, a drinking vessel offered to all visitors, is made from the skull of a family member who willingly starved for Zhakata. Vertebrae and finger bones create floral patterns over the doors and above beds. They remind the living of the blessed dead, and bring good luck. None of these things is obvious, since the bones are filed and polished until they gleam like ivory.

G'Hennans are generally happy. They treat visitors politely, provided the outsiders adhere to Zhakatan etiquette. Fasting is expected.

Encounters: Most encounters in G'Henna are with humans and mongrelmen, not unintelligent monsters. Humans belong to three categories: priests, worshippers, and blasphemers. Priests are 1st level characters equipped with leather armor, daggers, and scourges. They kill or enslave blasphemers, or give them to Yagno, who transforms them into mongrelmen. Worshippers report blasphemers to the priests. Blasphemers run from everyone.

Common	Rare
Great cats	Kobolds
Bats	Lycanthropes
Snakes	Wolves
Mongrelmen	Giant Insects
	Ghouls

Gundarak

The Lord and the Law: Duke Gundar, a vampire lord, rules Gundarak. He is older than Strahd but weaker in spirit. He had the misfortune of finding a temporary gate into Ravenloft. Once inside, he could not leave.

Gundar's enforcers include 2nd level fighters equipped with splint mail, one-handed bastard swords, and footman's maces.

The Land: Gundarak lies in the south-central region of the Core, with Barovia to the east and Invidia to the west. Like many of its neighbors, Gundarak is rugged and richly forested. Twisted oak, beech, and conifers predominate.

Most of the western terrain is foothills, which make the topography more wrinkled than an elephant's behind. The Balinoks rise along the eastern border. Several rivers and streams spill off the slopes and follow a twisted path across the domain, flowing west to join the Musarde River in Invidia.

One of the most spectacular gorges in Ravenloft is located in the southeastern corner of this domain. This narrow river gorge begins in Forlorn, then cuts deep into the mountains as it flows into Gundarak. The walls of the gorge rise nearly 1,000 feet in some places. Sunlight barely penetrates, and even the weeds turn yellow.

Gundarak has two major settlements, Teufeldorf and Zeidenburg. Roughly 4,000 people live in Teufeldorf, while 3,000 inhabit Zeidenburg. Castle Hunadora, Gundar's domicile, is seated on a hill several miles west of Zeidenburg.

Closing the Borders: When Gundar wants to seal his domain, the Mists of Ravenloft rise from the soil at the borders. Anyone who walks into them finds himself hopelessly lost, with all routes leading back to Gundarak.

The Folk: Gundrakan folk, mostly peasant farmers and herders, struggle daily to meet the tax rolls of the evil duke. Not even firewood can be gathered without charge. When a woman gives birth to a girl, the family is assessed a harsh penalty, ostensibly because she will not labor as hard in the fields as a boy. In the name of kindness, Gundar gives the family 15 years to pay the full amount. If they cannot, the girl is seized.

A large mob once killed Gundar's tax collectors and stormed the castle in a peasants' revolt. That night, all leaders of the rebellion were gruesomely slaughtered. Gundar suspended their corpses from the treetops in the orchards to set an example. To this day, no peasant can bear to eat the fruit of those trees.

Encounters: Each day the PCs adventure in the wilderness, roll for one encounter; the chance is 50%. At night, roll three times with the same percentage. No random encounters occur in town.

Common	Rare
Rats	Undead
Bats	Lycanthropes
Wolves	Kobolds
Spiders	

Hazlan

The Lord and the Law: Hazlik, an evil wizard, rules this domain. Every inhabitant knows he's the absolute dictator. His small council of "governors" (basically killers) impose his will on the folk. Most enforcers are 1st level fighters equipped with scale mail and war hammers.

The Land: Hazlan lies north of Bluetspur, in the southeastern corner of the Core. Barovia borders Hazlan in the west. To the east are the Nightmare Lands.

The eastern half of this domain spreads into lazy, rolling hills, which are grassy and easy to travel. In the west, the Balinoks rise up, and the terrain becomes rocky and rough. The northern part of the land is largely uninhabited wilderness.

Hazlan has two major towns, Toyalis and Sly-Var. Toyalis houses 8,000 people; Sly-Var, 4,500. The folk dwell in simple, whitewashed wooden homes with red tile roofs.

Closing the Borders: When Hazlan wants to seal his domain, a wall of fire leaps up at the borders. He must replenish the flames every hour, so the wall usually burns less than a day.

The Folk: The folk devote their efforts to pleasing Hazlan. He is a tough man to please. The governors relay his commands, and the folk obey each one instantly. Noncompliance means death or a trip to "the tables." A simple misunderstanding may mean the same. These tables, of course, are where Hazlik performs his experiments. Fear of this fate makes Hazlani natives paranoid and distrustful. Were it not for the threat of burning on the border, the people would leave en masse.

Encounters: Hazlan is a cornucopia of strange creatures, many of them misshapen. There is a 33% chance of an encounter twice a day, and three times at night.

Common	Rare
Bats	Berbalang
Wolves	Darkenbeast
Deer	Crimson death
Snake	Imp
	Leucrotta
	Mongrel man

Invidia

The Lord and the Law: Madame Gabrielle Aderre rules Invidia. She is a witch. The natives do not suspect she is the lord, but they know she is a powerful and wicked enchantress.

The Land: Invidia is a small southwestern domain cradled between Verbrek, Arkandale, Gundarak, and Sithicus. The Musarde River snakes from south to north across the land, creating a lush, twisting valley. Karina is the only major settlement, with a population of 2,000. It serves as a way station for river traffic, although boats arrive infrequently.

Closing the Borders: When Gabrielle wants to seal Invidia, a ring of fear encircles the domain. It is neither visible nor tangible, but characters who attempt to cross the border find themselves gripped by an unreasoning fear (no save). They flee 100 yards toward the center of the domain before they regain control.

The Folk: Crimes of violence and passion are common in Invidia. Grudges fester, arguments grow hot, and pain and sorrow inevitably follow. The folk view even their own kin with a suspicious or fearful eye. They fear Madame Aderre most of all. Her infrequent visits to town always lead to a rash of violent conflicts and broken friendships.

Encounters: The chance of an encounter is 33% once each day and once again after nightfall. Away from town, travelers may encounter Madame Aderre and her charmed servitors. This is one of the few lands in which a gypsy escort may be deadly. The gypsies themselves are in no danger, but the those with them are not immune to Madame Aderre's powers. (See "Aderre" in Chapter XIII for details.)

Common	Rare
Wolves	Wolfweres
Deer	Will o'wisps
Snakes	Jermlaine

Kartakass

The Lord and the Law: Harkon Lukas, a bard and wolfwere, rules Kartakass. Although he is recognized and respected throughout the domain, most natives know him only as a bard. Only a handful of humans know him as a wolfwere. Fewer still know him as lord of Kartakass.

Kartakass is a small domain with few villages. The *Meistersinger*, a kind of singing mayor, sets rules and arbitrates disputes in each village and its surroundings. (See "The Folk" below for more information.)

The Land: Kartakass is a heavily forested domain in the rugged foothills of the Balinoks. The hills are riddled with caverns, both small and large. Some are rumored to lead all the way to Bluetspur. Fog is common in low areas, rising from the soil as the afternoon sun begins to wane. The brush is dense, the ground rocky, and the way through the trees is twisted. When straying from the road or a clearing, riders on horseback barely move faster than a man on foot. When the fog sets in, riding off-trail becomes impossible; riders must lead their mounts with a hand outstretched to clear the branches.

The town of Skald, near the center of Kartakass, is home to nearly 2,000 people. The town is known for its sheep, whose wool is particularly fine. The houses fit the Kartakan style: one story, with wooden frames, and steep, densely thatched roofs. The homes have many small, arched windows, each with heavy shutters that can be locked and barred from inside. The shutters are painted bright blue or green; all Kartakans use the same two shades of paint. Villagers must labor continually to maintain the thatched roofs, because nightbirds pick mercilessly at the straw. To avoid the problem, a few wealthy men have capped their homes with imported red tile. Even then, the inhabitants sometimes hear frustrated pecking on the tiles at night.

The village Harmonia, in the south, shelters about 1,500 people. They claim to have the fin-

est singing voices in Ravenloft, and only the people of Skald dispute it. Harmonian architecture matches the description above, but the houses are larger. Villagers harbor livestock under their own roof, in separate quarters at the rear of the house. Despite such precautions, animals still fall prey to foxes and wolves.

Kartakans have cleared the land around each settlement for farming. Vegetables with bulbous roots thrive in the black Kartakan soil; beets grow to be 10 pounds or more apiece. The dark red bulbs and their green leafy tops are staples in the local cuisine.

Berries called *meekulbem* grow in wild, thorny thickets in the Kartakan hills. Natives distill the berries into *meekulbrau*. Reputedly, the bitter brew relaxes the throat and sweetens the voice. It's an acquired taste; most foreigners despise it.

Closing the Borders: When Lukas wants to seal his domain, those who try to leave hear a sweet song. The song lulls them to sleep. (No spell or saving throw can prevent it, though characters often try.) When the victims awake, they find themselves back in Kartakass.

The Folk: Most Kartakans have fair hair, blue-violet eyes, and pale complexions. Occasionally, a raven-haired child is born, with the same ivory skin and startling gaze. They are a lean, graceful breed.

Kartakans have rich, melodious voices—the kind granted to angels or sirens. The people have a melody for every labor, a song for every occasion. Their music drifts through the forests and echoes across the hills. Many tunes seem filled with sorrow, but in general Kartakans are content. They fear only the marauding wolf packs.

As the sun sinks below the horizon each night, Kartakans lock themselves in their homes. The wolves in Kartakass are thick as fleas on a dog, and unusually bold. They often wander the streets, and can breech any gate not securely fastened.

The people of Kartakass love nothing more than a good story. Most can spin yarns easily, due to years of practice. As the wolves prowl outside at night, families gather at the hearth to exchange tall tales. They call them *feeshka*, or "little lies."

A visitor who asks a Kartakan a simple question is likely to hear a believable tall tale that sends him on a wild goose chase. The natives try the same tricks on each other. They are good natured about being the victims of such a ruse. No one, however, deliberately sends a friend on a chase that will strand him in the wilderness at night.

The Meistersinger who governs each village also instructs the children. Kartakans believe that the gods handed down many of their songs. These divine songs, called *Mora*, teach lessons about morality, goodness, and happiness. The Meistersinger nurtures order and harmony in his (or her) village by passing on these moral lessons. His knowledge of the *Mora*, and his ability to interpret and sing them well, determines his stature in Kartakass. Each village holds an annual singing and storytelling contest to determine a new Meistersinger. The incumbent usually retains his position.

Encounters: Each day, there is a 50% chance of an encounter. Each night, there is a 25% chance of an encounter *every hour*. One fourth of all encounters involve some sort of wolves—normal wolves, dire wolves, werewolves, wolfweres, and (in winter) winter wolves.

Common	Rare
Wolves	Wolfweres
Dire wolves	Wights
Werewolves	Ghouls
Kobolds	Goblins
Boars	Leucrottas
	Werefoxes

Keening

The Lord and the Law: A banshee rules this domain. Her name is not known. Unlike most groaning spirits, she can wail three times each day. Once a powerful and evil drow elf in Arak, her spirit fled into the Mists upon her death. The powers of Ravenloft granted her a small land called Keening.

The banshee can sense the presence of any living creature in her domain. She attacks only those who are foolish enough to begin an ascent of her mountain.

The Land: If the banshee is wailing, travelers can hear her chilling moans the moment they cross the border. This small land surrounds a single peak, on which the banshee lives. There are no signs of life—only the big, lonely mountain. At its base lies a ruined town that once might have housed 10,000 people. According to gypsies, the mountain is honeycombed with tunnels and underground chambers.

Closing the Borders: The banshee can seal her domain with a wall of wind. No one can walk or fly through this wall, and no magic can diminish its force.

The Folk: The living do not dwell in Keening—only zombies and wights, who fill the city at the base of the mountain. All of them died when the banshee took control. Their emotionless daily routine mocks the habits of their former lives. They attack any living being who dares to interfere with their existence.

Encounters: Any undead creature that does not feed can be found here. (This eliminates ghouls, vampires, and the like.) No liches reside in Keening. Every hour, there is a 25% chance of an encounter with wandering undead.

Lamordia

The Lord and the Law: Mordenheim's monster, Adam, is the true lord of this domain, but it is not well known. Lamordians believe that Baron Von Aubrecker governs the land.

The Land: Lamordia is a coastal domain in the northwestern section of the Core. Darkon, Falkovnia, and Dementlieu huddle at its sides and back, and seem to thrust Lamordia toward the Sea of Sorrows just as young boys might shove a buddy toward a daring situation. A freakish weather pattern blows out of the Northwest and targets Lamordia with its fury. In winter, ice floes clog the harbors, and great frozen slabs rear up on the rocky shore. Lamordia may be consumed by a blizzard while Darkon suffers only a drizzle and Dementlieu's skies are clear. In late spring, the snowmelt in Lamordia turns roads into deep, gluey mud. In the short, warm summers, clouds of mosquitoes drift across the domain, plaguing the deer and elk.

A forested ridge called the "Sleeping Beast" stretches along the eastern border of this domain. The ridge shelters Falkovnia from Lamordian storms. The Vuchar River slips past the southern edge of the Sleeping Beast, continuing north until it splinters into a delta.

Lamordia is the only domain that always includes a portion of the Sea of Sorrows. Several islands lie off the northern tip of the domain, and they are included in Adam's land. The largest, the Isle of Agony, is Adam's usual hideout.

During low tide in summer, a muddy causeway links the islands to the mainland. It is possible to walk the causeway, but progress is slow, and the mud can engulf a man to his waist if he does not choose his footing carefully. Seabirds add to the hiker's worries by diving, harassing, and even attacking. When the tide is high, water covers the causeway. In winter, jutting slabs of ice join the isles to the mainland. To cross the ice safely, travelers need ropes and ice picks.

Lamordia has two settlements: Ludendorf and Neufurchtenburg, each housing fewer than 1,000 people. As in other domains, travelers will encounter isolated huts in the wilderness, but life here is too hard to attract many immigrants.

Schloss Mordenheim, Dr. Mordenheim's current estate, is north of Ludendorf on the coast. The manor has a reputation of being haunted, and the locals avoid it. They tolerate the doctor, but neither like nor trust him. The estate is set upon a cliff. In spring and summer, the waves crash against the rocks below. The cliff is dotted with caves.

Lamordians are even more fearful of a second locale, the Isle of Agony. Some claim it is home to a man-eating sea monster. Others call it "the devil's domicile." No one, not even adventurous young boys, will explore the island willingly.

Baron Von Aubrecker, the aristocrat who appears to rule this land, inhabits a castle perched on the Sleeping Beast. The castle lies several miles south of Ludendorf, and is linked by well-traveled road.

Closing the Borders: When Adam wants to close the borders, a driving blizzard hurls back any fool who attempts to leave.

The Folk: Lamordians are righteous and hardy folk who withstand the winters in good spirits. Blizzards may keep them indoors, but snow itself is no hindrance; they travel on skis, sleighs, and snowshoes.

Most Lamordians are craftsmen. They spend the winter months carving furniture and building musical instruments. As soon as the snow melts and the roads are passable, their work is exported to other lands. The goods bring an excellent price, a third of which goes to the Baron. Several trappers live in isolated areas of the domain, as do a few miners. Shepherds winter their animals on the leeward side of the Sleeping Beast.

The Lamordian diet is rich in protein and fat. A pudding thickened with sheep's blood is a local favorite. Cheese made from goat's milk is a dietary staple.

Encounters: Few monsters roam Lamordia, but there is always a chance of encountering Mordenheim's monster or a flesh golem. Occasionally, intelligent creatures move here from other domains, attracted by the relative isolation. Roll for an encounter once each day and night; the chance is 25%.

Common	Rare
Wolves	Bear
Caribou	Flesh golems
Giant weasel	Lycanthrope seawolf
Boar	Giant lynx
Moose	

Markovia

The Lord and the Law: Frantisek Markov, the beast lord, rules Markovia. The beast men call him "Diosamblet," or "the god who walks among us." The gypsies call him "Master of Pain."

The Land: Markovia is wild and undeveloped. Perched in the Balinoks near the center of the Core, it includes a major valley and surrounding peaks. No towns exist—only occasional groupings of crude huts, which were built by Markov's beast men.

Closing the Borders: When Markov wants to seal Markovia, a mist rises at the borders. Unlike other vapors in the Core, this one causes excruciating pain to anyone who enters. The pain is incapacitating—leading first to paralysis (over 1d4 rounds), then madness. Only one thing alleviates it: stepping back toward the heart of Markovia.

The Folk: Markovia has no folk, only the beast men created by Markov. Travelers should not linger here, lest they become permanent residents. Lord Markov believes visitors are gifts from the dark powers—more raw parts for his creations. He attempts to seize and preserve the bodies of anyone who enters his domain. Through surgical grafting and hormonal injections, he transforms them into beast men. He uses no anesthesia. The transformation, and its pain, leave most beast men simple-minded or mad.

The beast men pursue a crude existence as hunters and gatherers. Most obey Markov's orders without question. They fear him, and believe he is a god. Markov encourages this false belief.

Encounters: Roll for an encounter twice a day, and twice each night; the chance is always 50%. Most encounters involve beast men. They have standing orders to bring all intruders to Markov's estate. (They do not bother the gypsies, however.) The beast men try to seize intruders peacefully at first, by simply inviting them to Markov's estate. If this fails, they resort to violence.

Common	Rare
Beast men	Mountain lions
Wolves	Bears
Spiders	Boars
Snakes	Deer

Mordent

The Lord and the Law: The ghost of Lord Godefroy controls Mordent, though few natives know it. They see Godefroy as an unfortunate part of the local scene, an evil creature to be avoided. But they do not associate him with rulership or law.

Politically, the mayor of Mordentshire is most powerful. He is supported by a police force of 1st level warriors, who typically wear leather armor and carry footman's maces.

The Land: Mordent's western shore borders the Sea of Sorrows. Sheer cliffs overlook the turbulent sea, though few exceed 150 feet in height. Beaches are rocky; in most places, the waves break over boulders, erupting into spray. Behind the cliffs, the land stretches into great expanses of forest, or rolls gently, becoming moor. A few small pockets of land lie below sea level.

The Arden River flows north through Mordent until it nears Mordentshire, the domain's only major settlement. There, near the center of the coastline, the river turns abruptly and empties into the Arden Bay. The town, located high on a chalky cliff, overlooks the quiet harbor. Mordentshire boasts a population of about 2,000 people.

Two noteworthy estates are located near Mordentshire: the House on Gryphon Hill, and Heather House. Locals know the House on Gryphon Hill as the haunting grounds of Lord Godefroy. It is an evil place filled with terrible creatures. Heather House is the Weathermay family estate. This family owns most of the land directly southwest of town.

Closing the Borders: The Ravenloft Mists lie only a few hundred yards out to sea. They obscure the horizon, and make every sunset dazzling. At Lord Godefroy's request, the Mists roll in from the sea and hug the coastline. At other borders, the Mists rise from the soil of Mordent itself, completely sealing the domain. Characters who enter these Mists will discover that every route leads back to Mordent.

The Folk: Mordent's natives represent every size and color, but all are human. Laborers in Mordentshire are mostly fishermen, taut and lean from their work. The sea is their livelihood, and they reserve respect for those who also make their living from the sea. Peasants who reside away from the village tend to be herders.

Nearly everyone in Mordentshire knows the House on Gryphon Hill is haunted. They believe strongly in ghosts and other creatures from "the other side," and they're highly superstitious. But they do not think such creatures could invade their own homes, or multiply beyond existing levels. As the local saying goes, "Don't visit evil, and it won't visit you."

Most folk are well mannered and friendly toward strangers. Yet they're always politely reserved, and often secretive. Mordentish folk are masters of verbal evasion. They'll chat for hours about meaningless trivia, but they'll rarely answer a personal question or one of substance. When a storyteller is pressed into action, he'll usually share an old tale about an alchemist in Mordentshire, who invented an Apparatus in centuries past. Some say the Apparatus could take the soul from any being and cast it into oblivion, or even implant it in another body. (Mordentish parents often scare their children with this version or teasingly say, "You can't be my child. The Apparatus must have sent you.") Others claim the Apparatus separated the good and evil in a man, creating two separate men. The Apparatus supposedly was destroyed, but no one knows for sure. Most natives believe the entire tale is fiction.

Encounters: No random encounters with monsters occur in and around Mordentshire. This does not include the forests near the town, just the town itself and the nearby farmlands. (Encounters in town may include gypsies, strange folk, or ordinary animals, however.) In contrast, the Gryphon Hill area is teeming with horrid creatures—especially undead, excluding vampires and liches.

The table below lists common creatures in Mordent. Away from Gryphon Hill by day, characters have a 25% chance of encountering a beast from this list; after nightfall the chance doubles. On or near the infamous hill, there is a 20% chance of an encounter twice each day. Each night on Gryphon Hill, encounters occur every hour.

Common	Rare
Ghoul	Any undead
Haunt	Bats
Poltergeist	Hags
Shadow	Imp
Lycanthropes	Sahuagin
Snakes	Will 'o wisp
Spiders	Geist

Nightmare Lands

The Lord and the Law: The Nightmare Lands allegedly have no lord. Whoever, or whatever, controls this domain is surely mad.

The Land: The terrain changes so quickly it can only be described as alive. The sky changes color, the sun changes size, the air becomes hot and then cold. Each change is smooth, seamless, and tends to occur at the corner of the viewer's field of vision. The wilderness is truly trackless; no trail can form in such unstable country.

Plant life is unique. At times, it seems to move against the wind. Animals howl and gibber as they race by. The few monsters in the Nightmare Lands are alien and weird.

The Folk: Only the Abber nomads live in this domain. Their tribe is small. Unlike their surroundings, they appear stable and sane. They construct no buildings, and own only what they can carry. They are hunters, armed primarily with spears and bows.

Encounters: Each encounter is a unique experience. There is a 25% chance of an encounter during the day and again at night.

Nova Vaasa

The Lord and the Law: Malken, alter ego of Sir Hiregaard, is lord of Nova Vaasa. To all appearances, Sir Hiregaard is merely a noble. An unfortunate curse transforms him into the hideous fiend called Malken. Malken has terrorized many poor young women and murdered the men who crossed him. Not even the woman who loves Sir Hiregaard suspects the truth about him.

The political leader of this domain is Prince Othmar. His city militia include 1st level fighters equipped with ring mail and clubs.

The Land: Nova Vaasa lies in the crook of the Balinok Mountains, between Markovia and the Nightmare Lands. Next to the Balinoks, the terrain is rocky and steep, but it quickly spreads eastward into a vast, grassy plateau dotted with occasional outcroppings. Aside from the trees along the rivers, woods are scarce.

Nearly a quarter of the land is devoted to farming. Wheat, oats, and rye are the principal crops. The soil is rocky, and fields cleared for farming are bordered by crude stone walls. Despite Nova Vaasa's relative youth on the calendar, many of the walls appear ancient. Abandoned, roofless stone huts mark the habitats of forgotten families. The huts are grouped in a circle and ringed by low walls of stone.

Even newer buildings in Nova Vaasa are commonly made of stone. Nova Vaasan lumber often rots in just a few years. As a result, timber for construction usually must be imported from other domains.

The city of Kantora lies near the center of Nova Vaasa. It rivals Lekar and Il Aluk in size, with 16,000 people living in rather squalid conditions. The smaller towns of Liara, Egertus, Bergovitsa, and Arbora house between 2,000 and 8,000 people.

The domain is known for its horses. Many of which them run wild, particularly along the western border. The best mounts in Ravenloft come from Nova Vaasan bloodlines.

The Folk: Nova Vaasa is sharply divided into a small aristocracy, impoverished masses, and a vague middle class consisting of tax collectors, merchants, and clever thugs. Vice and violence are rampant among the settlements, and each town has an inordinate number of gambling houses and taverns.

Encounters: Most encounters are with bandits and men bent on mayhem. The only serious predators are the plains cats. These black, tailless creatures live in crevices in the granite outcroppings and hunt on the plains by night. The females hunt in prides, dragging down horses or other sizeable mammals. The chance of an encounter is 25%, once during the day and twice during the night.

Common	Rare
Horses	Plains cats
Snakes	Wolves
	Lycanthropes
	Jermlaine

Sithicus

The Lord and the Law: Lord Soth, a deathknight, rules Sithicus with reluctance. He came from Krynn. There, he murdered his first wife. After his second wife died in the Cataclysm, Soth became a deathknight. The woman warrior Kitiara was his dark, private passion. Lured by what he believed to be her

voice, Soth stepped through a dimensional rift. He found himself wandering the hills of Sithicus, knowing he had been cursed yet again. (See the DRAGONLANCE™ products to learn more about Soth's life on Krynn.)

The Land: Sithicus lies in the southwest region of the Core, just north of Valachan. The terrain is thickly forested, with many rifts and small cliffs. The lowlands are filled with bubbling springs and shallow pools.

Soth's castle, Nedragaard Keep, is hidden between two arms of an eerie ridge. The castle is a gift from the dark powers of the land. It resembles his own Dargaard Keep on Krynn. He is joined by the shadows of spirits and undead warriors who also haunted Dargaard Keep.

Closing the Borders: On Krynn, the deathknight was compelled to remember his sins each night in song. In Ravenloft, he can seal his borders by repeating this dismal ballad. As he sings, he is joined by the voices of other sinners. The sound, rising from the borders, is so horrid that no mortal can withstand it. All must return to Sithicus or become hopelessly mad.

The Folk: All natives of Sithicus are elves. They welcome other races, but most visitors cannot bear to remain. Soth despises the elves, because it was elves who deceived him and led to his loss of honor on Krynn. Sithicans feel bonded to the land, but they do not understand why. Even the most tormented of them stay in this domain, because they know other lands do not tolerate their race.

According to legend, a dark-haired human woman roams the hills at night. The elves claim it is Kitiara, who has come to torment Lord Soth.

Encounters: Most creaturely encounters involve groaning spirits, banshees, and other undead. There is a 33% chance of one encounter during the day, and the same chance three times during the night.

Common	Rare
Deer	Lycanthropes
Groaning spirits	Undead
Snakes	Wolves

Tepest

The Lord and the Law: Three hags rule Tepest together, forming the only known tribunal leadership of a domain. The hags represent each of the types described in *Monstrous Compendium 1*. The people know of them only through legend and myth.

The Land: Tepest is nestled in the Balinok Mountains directly south of Keening. The Timori Road, one of two established routes across the mountains, crosses Tepest from east to west. Near the center of the domain, the road hugs the southern shore of Lake Kronov. The lake's clear waters never freeze completely, though snow and ice cling to the surrounding peaks nearly half the year. The village of Viktal lies on the east end of the lake. Kellee is about 16 miles east on the Timori Road.

Closing the Borders: When the hags want their borders sealed, a violent storm encircles the domain. Stinging rain, snow, and bolts of lightning drive travelers inland toward the lake. Magic does not affect the bizarre storm.

The Folk: Viktal and Kellee, the two villages, house 3,000 people each. The folk are simple and poor, living in small, whitewashed cottages roofed with bundles of twigs and bark. As a matter of pride, they carefully adorn the cottage walls with intricate floral patterns in bright colors. In summer, the window boxes overflow with blossoms.

Viktalians herd goats and sheep, hunt bear and wild pig, or fish for sturgeon on the lake. The sturgeon caviar is a delicacy, reserved for special occasions. The people of Kellee also herd and hunt. The goats wear bells. As the herders guide their animals back toward the village at dusk, the gentle, haunting clangs echo across the valley.

Tepestanis are a superstitious lot, believing in "little beasties" and evil spirits that kidnap wicked people. When night falls, the doors shut tight. The folk even lock up their herds, in circular, roofed stables made of timber and twigs. The wood in this domain burns poorly with a lot of smoke; hence, the animals' dried dung more often fuels a fire.

Encounters: Goblins are common in these parts. Fortunately, the voracious appetite of the hags keeps their numbers in check. Unfortunately, the hags also hunger for humanoid flesh. During the day, roll once for an encounter; the chance is 50%. Roll twice after dark; the percentage stays the same. If characters venture into remote areas, double the number of rolls.

Common	Rare
Goblins	Wolves
Deer	Snakes
	Kelpie
	Bears

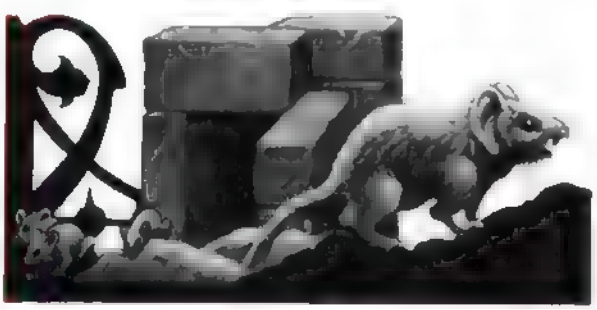
Richemulot

The Lord and the Law: Jacqueline Renier, a wererat, rules this domain. Most folk don't know wererats infest the land. Those who do cannot say who among the creatures is leader.

The Land: Richemulot has three large towns: Pont-a-Museau, St. Ronges, and Mortigny. At least a third of the buildings in each settlement lie empty or in ruins. Six thousand people live in Pont-a-Museau, but the city can house nearly 20,000 comfortably. About 3,000 folk inhabit the once-grand city of St. Ronges, leaving homes for another 12,000 citizens vacant. Mortigny has the largest current population, with 7,000 natives. If the buildings are any indication, another 5,000 folk once lived there.

Richemulot's settlements are known for their finely constructed sewer systems. The wererats live in these tunnels.

Closing the Borders: When Jacqueline wants to seal her domain, a horde of giant rats encircles the land. They form a border 50 feet thick, hanging from trees and hulking on the ground. It is impossible to fly over them and escape.



The Folk: Every family in Richemulot inhabits a large home or series of buildings—as much as they can fill comfortably. Most homes have fallen into ruin or disrepair. The people of Richemulot are not possessive about the things they own. Whatever they have was abandoned by someone before them.

Encounters: Richemulot is not a safe place to wander alone. During the day, the chance of an encounter is 50%. Roll once for a group of PCs. If a character is alone or has just one companion, roll for two encounters each day. At night, roll a 50% chance twice for average groups. If one or two people venture out alone after dark, roll three times instead.

Common	Rare
Rats	Skeletons
Goblins	Zombies
Wererats	Wights
Snakes	Berbalang
Spiders	Cloaker
	Lycanthropes

Valachan

The Lord and the Law: The Baron Urik von Kharkov, a vampire lord, rules this domain. He is a nosferatu vampire roughly 250 years old. Exiled to the ethereal plane, Urik wandered for decades until at last, weak and anemic, he stumbled into the Mists of Ravenloft. He takes the animal form of a panther, not a wolf.

The Land: Valachan (pronounced *voll a kon*) is a rugged, forested domain in the southwestern corner of the Core. Its ridges and numerous small canyons make overland travel difficult. Common wildlife includes deer, moose, boars, martens, eagles, and ravens. Bears and panthers also abide in the woods.

There are three towns of notable size: Ungrad, population 1,500; Rotwald, 4,000; and Habelnik, 3,500. The Baron's fortress, Castle Pantara, lies between Rotwald and Habelnik. The dark castle is crouched on a cliff above the main road, like the animal for which it is named.

Closing the Borders: When Baron von

Kharkov wants to seal his domain, the Mists of Ravenloft oblige him by encircling the land. Characters who enter the Mists become disoriented; upon leaving them, they find themselves back in Valachan.

The Folk: Valachani natives frequently suffer from White Fever, a mild flu that develops at night and leaves its victims listless and bedridden for several days. Or so they believe. In truth, the feedings of Urik and his vampire slaves cause this common complaint. The Baron rarely kills his victims. Though his appetite is vast, he prefers to bleed several victims conservatively each night rather than drain one or two to the verge of death. He imposes the same restraint on his slaves.

The folk recognize the Baron as their lord and ruler. He does not tax them harshly, but often summons them to work in his keep at night. The work is harsh; laborers usually return home with a case of White Fever.

Once a year, the Baron demands that a young woman leave her family and become his bride. She rarely lives out the year. The people assume that she either kills herself or dies from his abuse. The truth is far worse.

Encounters: The chance of an encounter is 25% twice a day, and four times at night. Panthers are simply black leopards. They are the primary predator in Valachan.

Common	Rare
Vampire	Panther
Boar	Bear
Deer or moose	Undead
Bats	Spiders

Verbrek

The Lord and the Law: Alfred Timothy the werewolf is the absolute lord of Verbrek. He hates humans, demihumans, and other forms of lycanthropes.

The Land: Verbrek is a patchwork of woods, marsh, and meadow on a rolling terrain. The forests are mostly deciduous, including oak, quaking aspen, and flowering dogwood. The clearings are dotted with thorny shrubs and carpeted with deep, emerald grasses. In autumn, as the leaves drop, the shrubbery bark turns to deep crimson, and the grass turns to gold. A ground fog settles in the hollows at night.

Verbrek has no villages or towns—only small hamlets with a few families each. In a clearing near the center of the domain stands a circle of roughly hewn stones, each twice the height of a man. Natives call it simply "The Circle."

Closing the Borders: Alfred Timothy cannot seal his domain completely. To prevent escape, he summons a large group of wolves and werewolves to patrol the borders.

The Folk: A few hundred natives inhabit Verbrek. All are werewolves. They are the only large carnivores in this domain.

On the full moon following each solstice and equinox, the packs meet at The Circle. At this time, they celebrate the hunt, settle legal issues, perform marriages, and trade a little.

The werewolves of Verbrek tolerate the gypsies and anyone in their charge. Any traveler who enters uninvited, or without a gypsy escort, becomes game—meaning both prey and entertainment. When the werewolves catch a man, they strip him of all his possessions. Under the pretense of fairness, they inform him that he has half an hour to prove his mettle. Then they let him run. When the half hour ends, the werewolves begin the hunt. If the victim can make it to the border before the creatures capture him, he lives. In the interest of sport, the creatures may grant extra time to a victim whose ability to flee is obviously poor. Then again, they may not.

Encounters: Most of the dangerous encounters in Verbrek involve werewolves. A few undead creatures also inhabit the domain—all of them immaterial, such as ghosts, spectres, or geists.

Ravenloft
STAUNTON
BLUFFS
SOURAGNE
MECHOR
SRI RAJI
ZHERISIA
FARELLE
SANGUINIA

Chapter XII: ISLANDS OF TERROR

Eight domains in Ravenloft float independently in the Misty Border, forming isolated pockets of terror. Each is permanently surrounded by Mist and has no physical link to any other domain. The domains are pictured as a group on one of the color maps in this boxed set, but their position on the map is arbitrary. No sailor in the vast sea of Mists can chart a course to these islands. Nor would any sane sailor try.

This chapter describes each "island" domain, including its lord, land, folk, and random encounters. The text follows the format of the previous chapter. Refer to "The Domains in Detail" on page 60 for explanatory notes.

Farelle

The Lord and the Law: Jack Karn is lord of this domain. He is also a jackalwere. The people of Farelle are blind to his bestial nature. To them, he is only a wandering tinker.

The Land: Farelle is a wild and wooded domain floating in the Mists. It has two towns, Kaynis in the west and Mortilis in the east. Both of them lie in an area devoted to agriculture. The summers are hot and the winters bitter cold.

The woods support a wide variety of life, especially carnivores. Dog packs and jackals are common threats to the folk.

Closing the Borders: Karn has no magical or mystical means of sealing his domain. Instead, he must send his dogs and jackals to patrol the border. Their senses are keen and their numbers formidable. Escape is virtually impossible unless Karn allows it.

The Folk: Farellian people are simple but prolific. Women commonly bear 13 children or more before they become too old or weary to continue. There is no fear of overpopulation. Stillbirths are common, and carnivores help keep the natives' numbers in check.

Most Farellians are peasant farmers. Some make their living by hunting, but that profession can be as deadly for them as it is for their prey.

Encounters: Jackalweres and other predators endanger travelers in the forest. The roads and towns are safe during the day, except from the jackalweres.

Common	Rare
Deer	Wild dogs
Jackals	Lycanthropes
	Boars

Har'akir

The Lord and the Law: An ancient mummy, the pharaoh Anhktepot, is the evil lord of this domain. His tomb lies in a small canyon guarded by two monolithic statues.

The Land: Har'Akir is a small, searingly hot desert floating in the Mists of Ravenloft. Sandy expanses stretch across the northern part of the domain, while rocky, barren canyons cover the south. The Mists of Ravenloft hover above the land in a shimmering mass, blurring the horizon. To the parched observer, it seems that the desert goes on forever.

Har'Akir has a single settlement, Muhar, which lies beside a small, spring-fed pond. Fewer than 100 people live in large cabanas by the pond. All natural vegetation has been stripped from the area.

Closing the Borders: When Anhktepot wants to seal his domain, the borders radiate an impenetrable wall of heat. Travelers who attempt to withstand it eventually turn to ash.

The Folk: Har'Akiri natives are small, brown people whose faces are weathered and lined. They wear loose, white robes to keep the heat at bay, and headcloths, which can be drawn across the face when wind stirs the sand. They are wary of strangers, but are not hostile. Water is like gold to these folk, expensive and rare.

Encounters: Few monsters inhabit this domain. The indigenous species live in the rocky southern cliffs by day, and wander the desert after nightfall. The desert is almost void of life, and the cliff creatures appear to have no natural prey. How they survive is a mystery.

Common	Rare
Ant lion	Leopard
Sandling	Lion
Jackal	Snakes
Scorpions	Undead

Sanguinia

The Lord and the Law: Ladislav Mircea rules Sanguinia. He is a vampire. The folk know him as their cruel, despotic prince, not as a creature of the night.

The Land: Sanguinia is a mountainous domain completely surrounded by Mist. The highest peak, Mount Radu, rises more than 11,000 feet in the west. It is permanently snowcapped. The exact elevation is difficult to determine, because Sanguinia has no distinct "sea level." At the land's lowest point, where clear streams gently descend into the Misty Border, the elevation is assumed to be 700 feet.

Sanguinia has three settlements: Tirgo, Fagarus, and Kosova. Each is located beside a river. Castle Guirgiu, Prince Mircea's abode, sits on a large spur of rock near the center of the domain. Mt. Radu looms behind it.

The weather here is always cold and harsh. Lake Argus, near the center of the domain, is sealed with ice in every season but summer. A strong, harsh wind blows down from the mountain top.

Closing the Borders: The Mists of Ravenloft help Ladislav seal his domain. When he wants to prevent escape, anyone who enters the Misty Border eventually finds himself back in Sanguinia. The Mists sometimes take the form of a blinding snowstorm, bending the fir and pines.

The Folk: Death comes easily in this land, so life is considered precious. Sanguinians cherish their children, are very expressive of their emotions, and live life as fully and robustly as possible.

Encounters: In this cruel environment, many predators stalk the domestic animals. Away from the towns, the chance of an encounter is 25% twice each day and three times each night.

Common	Rare
Bighorn sheep	Winter wolves
Mountain goats*	Werewolves
Goblins	Undead
Owls	Bears
Deer and elk	

Souragne

The Lord and the Law: Anton Misroi, the zombie master, is lord of this domain.

The Land: A slice of dry land covers the eastern side of Souragne, but the western two-thirds is a dark, swampy maze of waterways, winding through towering cypress draped with moss. Most of the swamp region is submerged. A few solid patches of land rise out of the water, but only a handful of men know their location.

Souragne includes a sliver of ocean on its northern side. The land gives way to a band of saltwater before it meets the Ravenloft Mists a few miles offshore. A small town, Port d'Elhour, lies on the coastline east of the swamp.

Closing the Borders: When Anton wants his borders sealed, the Mists direct travelers back into the domain. Anyone who enters the Misty Border eventually finds himself back in Souragne.

The Folk: Souragnien people are very superstitious. They believe in a variety of nature gods, including the "Lord of the Dead," who watches over the swamp. None of the villagers ventures into the swamp willingly, but it is rumored that some outcasts live in floating houses deep within it. The shaman is not afraid to enter the swamp.

Encounters: Common encounters in the swamp include lower level undead, skeletons, zombies, and the like. Away from the swamp, such creatures are rare.

Common	Rare
Crocodiles	Lizards
Snakes	Toads and frogs
Leeches	Shambling mound
Giant insects	Will o'wisp
	Undead

Sri Raji

The Lord and the Law: Lord Arijani rules this domain. He is a rakshasa, a creature often described as "the embodiment of nightmares." To the locals, he appears human. They know him as the high priest of Kali.

The Land: Sri Raji is an isolated domain whose boundaries gently wave, creating small protrusions of land as well as intrusions of Mist. The Yamasha Mountains rise in the west. On the slopes of Mt. Yamatali, the highest peak, sits a great temple. In the valley below are three towns.

The Sri Rajin climate is universally hot and muggy. A jungle covers the entire domain, excluding portions that have been cleared for agriculture.

Closing the Borders: When Arijani wants to seal his domain, a wall of phantasmal killers rises from the borders. The killers cannot be dispelled or disbelieved. Each creature acts in accordance with the *phantasmal killer* spell, but it attacks only those who are trying to leave.

The Folk: The people are devout and fearful believers in their gods, particularly Kali. They believe that life in Ravenloft is divine punishment for a lack of true faith. Each day, the goddess demands that one of them relinquish his or her earthly bonds as proof of piety. The people believe the victim leaves Sri Raji to commune with greater powers. In reality, the victim is secretly eaten by the rakshasa.

The society is rigidly divided into classes. Families are large and the towns are extremely crowded. The Indian material in the *Legends and Lore* book is quite appropriate if you have access to it.

Encounters: The jungle teems with life, much of it dangerous. Arijani rarely leaves his temple, and should be encountered only as part of an adventure plot.

Common	Rare
Giant Insects	Nagas
Spiders	Man-eating plants
Snakes	Elephants
Monkeys	Tigers
	Weretigers

Staunton Bluffs

The Lord and the Law: The spirit of Sir Torrence Bleysmith rules here. He does not torment the folk who avoid him. They abide in the west; he haunts the east.

The Land: Staunton Bluffs is a small, isolated domain. A line of sandstone cliffs, running north to south, divides the land in half. The western region is relatively flat and good for farming, with a few wooded patches. The bluffs rise above it. At their highest point, near the center of the land, a castle is perched on a cliff. It is Castle Stonecrest, Bleysmith's haunt.

Most natives of this domain live in modest white cottages, which are scattered across the farmland. Staunton Bluffs also has one tiny settlement named Willisford. The village is located beside a river in the west.

The weather in Staunton Bluffs is generally cold and wet. Mornings begin with a misty rain or fog, but the skies often clear by noon. As the sun fades, the mists return. They spill off the bluffs and settle over the farmlands, bringing with them the weird sounds of night.

Closing the Borders: When Bleysmith wants to seal his domain, the Mists of Ravenloft respond. Anyone who enters the Misty Border surrounding the land finds that every route leads back into Staunton Bluffs.

The Folk: In comparison to other domains, life is good here, albeit boring. As long as the folk stay away from the cliffs and Castle Stonecrest, they can go peacefully about their business. They are not rich or even comfortable, but with hard work each day, they survive.

Encounters: Nothing horrid wanders west of the bluffs, but a few of the wild animals there can be dangerous. The area east of the bluffs is haunted by bodiless undead.

Common	Rare
Bodiless Undead	Wolves
Townsfolk	Boar
	Deer
	Lycanthropes

Vechor

The Lord and the Law: Easan the Mad rules Vechor. The folk recognize him as their king, although they know he is mentally deranged. People who openly oppose him eventually vanish if they're lucky. Those who are not so lucky turn up dead, or worse.

The Land: Vechor is an island in the Mists. Its border is as strange and twisted as Easan's mind, combining curves and unnaturally straight sections like a piece from a jigsaw puzzle.

The town of Abdok lies in the east. Farmlands surround the town; lands elsewhere are lightly forested. The Cliffs of Vesanis run east to west across the southern tip of the domain. No one who has climbed them to explore the highlands beyond has ever returned.

Closing the Borders: When Easan wants to prevent escape, a wall of animated trees springs up from the borders. Only a few trees may appear at first. If characters still attempt to escape, more trees appear. The wall of trees is impervious to fire and impossible to breach. Strange raptors, which are perched in the branches, ensure that flight is an equally deadly proposition.

The Folk: Townsfolk in Abdok are calm and stoic. They are accustomed to change, because neither their ruler nor the domain is stable. Not long ago, Easan suddenly decided that each citizen should be branded with an "E" to honor him. Recently the trees became mobile, and the entire layout of the forest shifted. The folk take most of this in stride. Some believe that one day a knight will step out of the Mists and dethrone their king. Unfortunately, that knight may be the harbinger of an even greater darkness.

Encounters: In Vechor, the dead may walk, creatures of stone may prowl the cliffs, and trees may bend their stiff, creaking arms to embrace the travelers passing by. Anything may be encountered here, and all manner of strange events may occur. It all depends on Easan.

Zherisia

The Lord and the Law: Sodo the doppleganger is lord of Zherisia. The people do not know he exists. But in hushed tones, they discuss his frequent and grisly murders, which are committed with a surgical blade. The natives have not guessed the murderer's identity.

The Land: The grimy city of Paridon dominates this small domain. It is situated at the heart, and the surrounding lands are farmed. Even so, Zherisians have barely enough food to survive.

Closing the Borders: The Mists of Ravenloft seal this domain when Sodo desires it. Anyone entering the Mists eventually finds himself back in Zherisia.

The Folk: Hunger, disease, and crime are common here. The folk are divided into two classes: those with money and those without.

Encounters: Zherisia has no indigenous monsters. An undead creature or lycanthrope occasionally may visit the land, however, wandering out of the Mists. Some of the normal folk are considered monsters by those who know them well.

Chapter XIII: THE *WHO'S DOOMED* OF RAVENLOFT

This chapter introduces important men and women of Ravenloft—from lords to lily-white defenders of justice. Not every lord is listed here, only the key rulers. All characters (or creatures, as the case may be) appear in alphabetical order.

Eventually you may want to create new characters of your own. The following tips will help you design sinister, successful villains for your Ravenloft campaigns.

Developing New Lords of Your Own

Ravenloft's villains are characters as well as creatures. Strive for a well-rounded personality. An evil monster that roams the land as a mindless killing machine is boring as well as trite. The lords of Ravenloft are tortured souls. Despite their decidedly dark nature, most still have a tiny kernel of goodness. Some small part of them evokes our sympathy or pity. Yes, they are evil, and they must at least be stopped if not destroyed. But basically, they are human—human enough that a priest might think, "There for the grace of the gods go I."

To flesh out new villains, start with their history. What kind of childhood did they have? What have they done in the past? What has been done to them? Think about their relationships with family and other loved ones. What were those relationships? What are they today? Ponder their motivations. Why do they do what they do? How do they justify their actions? What are their likes, dislikes, fears, and passions? What is their reputation; in other words, what do the folk know and think of them? While you may not choose to answer all these questions in voluminous detail, the more you know about a villain, the more interesting and more believable a character he or she can become.

Many of the evil creatures in Ravenloft are cursed. Chapter VI, "Curses," and the lords in this chapter provide examples. Keep in mind that such a curse arises from the character's actions in the past, and influences his attitudes and actions in the present.

The table below lists some traits and attitudes to consider when you're creating a character. It's not a complete shopping list, just a tool to get you thinking. Try not to create a lord who is wholly one trait or its opposite. Few "rude people" are rude every second of every day. You also should avoid a character who cannot boast a single virtue. The creature you are developing is evil, and there should be no question about it. But even evil characters can be polite, or be loyal to the ones they love. Characters who appear as "death incarnate" at first glance usually make less interesting encounters.

Personality Traits

Cruel/Kind	Humble/Egotistical
Loyal/Traitorous	Depressed/Content
Emotional/Reserved	Fidgety/Calm
Pessimistic/Optimistic	Prejudiced/Fair
Selfish/Generous	Sorrowful/Gleeful
Rude/Polite	Sensitive/Thick skinned
Impatient/Patient	

After you have fleshed out his or her background and personality, you can embellish the character with other details. Do they have distinctive habits or patterns of behavior? How do they look? Has their appearance changed with time? Do they wear distinctive costumes, or have a pet or constant companion?

Once you've answered questions like the ones above, giving your character the powers and weaknesses of a creature is easy. Most Ravenloft villains are based upon conventional monsters such as vampires, werewolves, and ghosts. They fit the same basic description, with a few unusual or unexpected abilities. For example, the vampire Strahd Von Zarovich is also a high-level necromancer. Be creative; if every monster in your campaign is a wizard, spellcasting villains soon will become old hat. A major vulnerability also should be unexpected. For example, a werewolf in Ravenloft may be destroyed by salt instead of silver bullets.

Don't be afraid to make the villain powerful. Most lords cannot be destroyed by the average PC, even one of high level. A Ravenloft adventure usually involves thwarting the plan of a lord and escaping alive, not destroying the lord. If your goal is to create a villain whom the adventurers can kill, give him or her a small land away from the Core. The land probably will dissolve with the villain's destruction.

Aderre, Gabrielle

Lord of Invidia
8th Level Enchanter, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	—	Con	10
Hit Points	21	Int	13
THAC0	18	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	spells and evil eye		
Special Defenses	nil		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Gabrielle is a small, solid woman with hypnotic black eyes. Her hair is long, black, and wild, cascading in waves to the small of her back. Her dark hair and eyes come from her mother, a gypsy; her pale skin is drawn from her nongypsy father. She is middle-aged, though apart from a mass of gray hair at her left temple, she looks several years younger, having the carriage of a young woman.

Gabrielle dresses like a gypsy, in vibrant, tiered skirts that swirl round her ankles, and blouses embroidered with silver and golden threads. A kerchief often covers her head. Her ears are pierced with large gold hoops, every finger is laden with rings, and gold chains adorn her ankles and neck. She usually walks barefoot, strutting in her finery like an exotic jungle bird—one that is angry, bold, and predatory.

Background: Gabrielle's bloodlines link her to Madame Eva, the first gypsy in Ravenloft. She is only part gypsy, however, and therefore is not embraced by those of full blood. Gabrielle's mother, Isabella, also was not of full blood, and was outcast from the gypsy tribes as a young girl. Only 12, Isabella became a slave in Falkovnia.

At 19, Isabella finally escaped from her master's bonds. She was pregnant, and gave birth to Gabrielle in Richemulot. They traveled alone, barely surviving by begging, stealing, telling fortunes, and entertaining. Isabella taught her daughter the gypsy charms and enchantments, just as her own mother, Gabrielle's grandmother, had done for her. Isabella did not reveal the identity of Gabrielle's father, and forbade her daughter to speak of him. She would say only that he was evil, and that Gabrielle carried the evil inside her. "You must never bear children," said Isabella to her daughter. "A man, a babe, a home—these things can never be for you, Gabrielle, because tragedy will be the only result." Gabrielle grew up bitter, despising the gypsies and the folk who made her an outcast, and eventually even her mother, who had ensured her eternal loneliness.

When Gabrielle was 19, her mother was killed by a werewolf in Arkandale. Gabrielle fled into the Mists of Ravenloft. She was full of hate and plans of vengeance. The dark powers of the land opened their arms and took her in. As her hatred grew, they increased her strength, until she achieved the power to become a lord.

Today, Gabrielle is lord of Invidia. (She seized control of the land from its former lord, a werewolf who attempted to enslave her.) She is an intense, persuasive, and charismatic woman. She despises the gypsies, but since she cannot harm them directly (see below), she often tries to manipulate others into doing so. She is not fond of the natives in her domain, and is jealous of any happiness they manage to find. One of her few pleasures is toying with these innocent folk, destroying attachments, ruining families, and

undercutting any person of social stature.

Combat: Gabrielle Aderre is an 8th level enchanter. She also has the power of the evil eye. She can cast any memorized enchantment or charm spell from her eyes, and she can do so once per round, at will, without spell components. (See her spell list below.) Spells cast by her "evil eye" do not count against those she can cast normally. If she has memorized *charm person*, she could cast it through the evil eye 100 times that day.

Characters with gypsy blood receive a +2 bonus to their saving throw against Gabrielle's evil eye. Full-blooded gypsies are completely immune to her powers and spells. She can never wreak the vengeance she seeks; that is her curse.

Madame Gabrielle surrounds herself with charmed servitors. They will protect her, even at the expense of their own lives. The most powerful of these is a wolfwere named Matton.

Spell List (* usable by the evil eye):
1st level: affect normal fires, charm person*, friends*, hypnotism*, mending, read magic, sleep*, wizard mark

2nd level: alter self, bind, ESP, fog cloud, forget*, ray of enfeeblement*, scare*, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*, whispering wind

3rd level: dispel magic, hold person*, spectral force, suggestion, wraithform

4th level: charm monster*, confusion*, curse, emotion*, magic mirror

Azalin

Lord of Darkon
18th Level Lich, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	0	Str	17
Movement	12	Dex	10
Level/Hit Dice	18 (wiz.)	Con	18
Hit Points	54	Int	18
THAC0	10	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	1-10		
Special Attacks	spells		
Special Defenses	+1 weap. to hit (see below)		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Azalin is a lich. His body is a dried skeletal thing held together by magic. His eye sockets are black and empty, with pinpoints of light burning deep in their recesses. His nose is an empty skeletal hole that is shaped like an inverted heart. The flesh still clings to his bones, but it is withered, like that of a mummy. In a century or so, his skeleton will be bare.

When he wants to emphasize his undead nature, Azalin wears just a cape, with a burial shroud girding his loins, and a few pieces of jewelry such as rings, arm bands, or a necklace. The cape is usually black with blood-red trim. He leaves it open to display his withered body. On his head he wears a black iron crown. A single, large yellow gem adorns the crown's central spike.

When he wants to appear less shocking, Azalin dons garments that conceal most of his body. Gloves cover his hands, and a high-necked shirt hides his throat and jaw. The garments are always of the finest materials, suitable for the ruler of Ravenloft's largest domain. He still wears the crown.

On many occasions, Azalin prefers to look like a normal, living character. He disguises himself with a powerful illusion. He can choose any appearance—even that of a woman or demihuman close to his own height. He wears rich clothing. He also dons his crown, but it may not be a part of his illusion. His voice and odor change to fit the illusion. The only thing he cannot conceal is his aura of netherworld cold. Because of it, he never gets too close to those he wishes to deceive.

When not wrapped in illusion, Azalin smells of death. The odor is difficult to describe—a mixture of mold, dust, and sour decay. Yet anyone who has smelled death before will instantly recognize the scent.

No matter which form he assumes, Azalin is always surrounded by the aura of absolute cold. The aura itself is not harmful, but even creatures that are native to cold climates shiver when he is standing nearby.

Background: Azalin was once a human and a powerful wizard king in the lands of men, although he was known by another name. He became obsessed with power and magical learning. Never one to care about what was right or wrong, he eagerly became a lich.

As an undead mage, he ruled and tormented

his subjects for decades. Finally they hired a powerful band of mercenaries to destroy him. The mage, desperate and near capture, fled into a glen cloaked in fog. The mercenaries searched the glen, but could not find him. Azalin was gone. The Mists had carried him into Barovia, the domain ruled by Strahd Von Zarovich.

Azalin was trapped in Ravenloft. Though his physical powers were greater than Strahd's, the mage still feared the vampire. Azalin was mystified by Strahd's connection to the land. He believed that without Strahd, Barovia and all within it—including himself—would cease to exist. Under great duress, Azalin became Strahd's servant. He loathed every moment. He vowed that if he won his freedom, he would never swear fealty to any creature living or dead.

At Strahd's behest, Azalin taught the master vampire great sorceries. In addition, Azalin spent much of his time investigating the mysterious mists surrounding Barovia. Strahd wanted him to find a way out of the pocket universe—and Azalin, yearning for the same escape—willingly complied. In time, Azalin and Strahd found passage to Mordent, where an alchemist was experimenting with a magical apparatus. But Mordent was already linked to Ravenloft. Azalin and Strahd had found no escape.

The lich eventually discovered that any powerful personality might be granted a land in Ravenloft. Rather than stay in Barovia, he walked into Strahd's choking fog. The poison did not affect him. His forceful personality created Darkon, the largest domain in Ravenloft.

Current Sketch: More than anything else, Azalin desires power. Ravenloft gave him tremendous strength, but it paralyzed him as well. He can never rise above the experience level he now holds. And he can never learn more magic than he now knows. Even if presented with a scroll and tutored in the use of new spells upon it, he cannot learn them. Magical information—even that not related to spells—seems to slip through his mind like dust through a net. If he were offered information about the workings of the elemental plane, for instance, he would not remember it. Yet he would bear the pain of knowing that he once grasped that information. It is his curse to exist among mortals whose potential is, by comparison, boundless. If another wizard casts a spell that Azalin does not know, the lich burns with rage. Unable to progress, he looks backward, and longs for his former life.

In Ravenloft, few people know Azalin is a lich. Most folk, especially his subjects, see him as a despotic tyrant, evil but human. A few of his advisors are aware of his undead status. All of them are monsters in their own right—vampires, drow, and the like. Some of the other lords of Ravenloft know him for what he truly is. Strahd Von Zarovich certainly is aware of Azalin's true nature.

To reinforce his superiority and soothe his battered ego, Azalin encourages his subjects to debase themselves. He throws parties for the nobles, where debauchery is expected, and gross acts of evil are the entertainment. He toys with the allegiances of men, seeing how far they will sink to curry his favor. Torment is an art form to him.

Azalin's long term goals are unknowable. He is wholly evil and brilliant. Though he cannot remember new spells, his retention of other details is remarkable. He knows who has visited Darkon in the past and who is visiting his land today. He also monitors activities in other domains. A group of adventurers should never be able to get the upper hand on him. His plots contain circles within circles, always pitting rivals

against each other. As soon as you think he has made a mistake, you realize that you are doing exactly what he wanted you to do.

Combat: Azalin does not engage in melee unless no other option exists. He rarely uses a weapon, but if he does, he adds a +1 Strength bonus to his "to hit" roll and damage. When he reveals his true nature, everyone within view must make a fear check with a −6 penalty. Any creature of less than 5 hit dice (or 5th level) automatically fails the check.

The touch of the lich is an absolute cold from beyond the grave. This touch inflicts 1-10 points of damage, but no Strength bonus is applied. When touched by this numbing cold, the victim must roll a save vs. paralysis; a failed save means that he is completely unable to move. The paralysis lasts until some outside power dispels it.

This lich is immune to any weapon with a magical bonus less than +1. Monsters of less than 6 hit dice cannot harm him with normal physical attacks. He is utterly immune to charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, death or any form of mind control.

Azalin keeps a *stoneskin* spell active at all times. If he is successfully attacked from behind, his contingency spell is triggered; the attacker is hit with *flesh to stone*.

Azalin prefers to use his spells to immobilize and capture his opponents. He only tries to destroy them if he is hard pressed in combat. Once prisoners, they are subjected to horrible tortures and frequently become his undead servants or unwilling slaves.

Azalin keeps innumerable scrolls in his palace, all written by himself. He usually doesn't carry them on his person, but he is rarely far from one. On this right hand, Azalin wears a *ring of wizardry*, which doubles all 1st through 3rd level spells. He also carries a *wand of frost*. On his head is a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic*. Other assorted magical items are scattered throughout his palace—most of little value. Azalin has made a habit of collecting any magical item, even cursed ones. (He cannot use most of them, however; see above.)

Azalin can raise any dead humanoid body to undead life. The numbers appear limitless. In a battle with Vlad Drakov's forces, Azalin raised all the dead on the battle field simultaneously, and swept away the opposing forces. Furthermore, Azalin can command any undead, and his orders override all others.

Still, Azalin's most fearsome power is spellcasting. He is an 18th level mage and a genius. He has more years of experience than any living creature—and more than many undead creatures, too. He always uses his spells creatively to gain the maximum effect. Below is a complete listing of his spell books and the number of spells he can memorize each day. Unlike a living wizard, he is not restricted by the number of spells in his books.

Spell List:

1st level (5 per day, 10 w/ring): affect normal fires, alarm, change self, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, enlarge, hold portal, identify, light, magic missile, message, phantasmal force, read magic, Tenser's floating disc, unseen servant, wizard mark

2nd level (5 per day, 10 w/ring): alter self, bind, continual light, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, flaming sphere, fog cloud, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, knock, locate object, magic mouth, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, shatter, spectral hand, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, web, wizard lock

3rd level (5 per day, 10 w/ring): clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, fly, haste, hold person, item, lightning bolt, nondetection, protection from good 10' radius, suggestion, wind wall, wraithform

4th level (5 per day): charm monster, confusion, contagion, dimension door, emotion, Evard's black tentacles, fire trap, ice storm, magic mirror, minor globe of invulnerability, phantasmal killer, polymorph other, curse, shadow monsters, stoneskin, wall of ice, wizard eye

5th level (5 per day): animal growth, animate dead, chaos, conjure elemental, domination, feeblemind, hold monster, magic jar, monster summoning III, passwall, sending, summon shadow, telekinesis, wall of stone

6th level (3 per day): Bigby's forceful hand, contingency, death fog, disintegrate, enchant an item, eyebite, geas, guards and wards, legend lore, project image, stone to flesh, true seeing

7th level (3 per day): Drawmij's instant summons, finger of death, forcecage, limited wish, monster summoning V, power word stun, spell

turning, teleport without error, vision

8th level (3 per day): binding, demand, incendiary cloud, Otiluke's telekinetic sphere, maze, permanency, prismatic wall, symbol, trap the soul

9th level (1 per day): Bigby's crushing hand, energy drain, foresight, gate, Mordenkainen's disjunction, temporal stasis, wish

Azalin keeps his life force in a special amulet. Destroying his body merely triggers the amulet to seek out a new one. He reanimates in a dead humanoid within range of his amulet. The process takes 3 full days. This new body houses the personality of Azalin. He keeps the amulet in a secret crypt that has many bodies in it. The defenses of the crypt are formidable. If the amulet is destroyed, Azalin's life force immediately enters his current body. The lich is instantly aware of this happening. If the amulet were ever destroyed along with his current body, Azalin would be permanently dead.

d'Honaire, Dominic

Lord of Dementlieu
7th Level Enchanter, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	10
Hit Points	18	Int	17
THAC0	18	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	see below		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Dominic is about 5'7" and slightly plump. He pulls back his red hair into a short, well-groomed ponytail, and wears a neatly trimmed beard and mustache. He can control his apparent Charisma. When Dominic "plays dumb," his effective Charisma ranges from 7 to 14. His usual score is about 11.

Background: This lord is the grandson of Dr. Germain d'Honaire, a mesmerist who was in Mordent when it became part of Ravenloft. Dominic's mother died in childbirth. He was the proverbial "bad seed"—born with an evil core that no doubt caused her death. As a child, he could suggest an idea so subtly, so skillfully, that even adults would believe it was their own. He would pit one person against another, cause serious damage, and never take the blame himself. The more chaos, anger, and hate his intrigues generated, the happier Dominic became.

Dominic was a handsome child, and especially flirtatious with the ladies. They, of course, found it harmless and charming, and lavished affection on the poor, motherless boy. They did not suspect how twisted and advanced his little mind actually was.

When his grandfather died, the family decided to leave Mordent. This actually was Dominic's idea, although Claude, his father, thought it was his own. Claude decided to brave the Mists of Ravenloft and see where it took them. New lands opened up for little Dominic. Unbeknownst to his family, he became lord of the new domain, Dementlieu.

Current Sketch: Dominic is a master manipulator and a schemer, too. He sits like a spider within a complex web of plots. Like most lords, Dominic received a curse along with his domain. The more romantically attracted he becomes to a woman, the uglier she finds him. To others, his appearance is unchanged. To her, he becomes repulsive. The curse makes him bitter and frustrated. He killed his first love in anger, because she could not bear the sight of him. His marriage is one of political convenience, with no emotional bonds.

Combat: Dominic has the combat abilities and spell effects of a 7th level enchanter, but he cannot cast spells per se. His voice can act as a *suggestion* spell at any time. His gaze can act as a *domination* spell. Dominic himself is completely immune to any sort of mental attack. He avoids personal combat at all costs. He has several powerful protectors, who will fight for him if necessary.

Dilisnya, Ivan

Lord of Dorvinia
0 level human, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (or by armor)	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	22

Hit Points	8	Int	18
THAC0	20	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	7
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	poison touch (see below)		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Ivan is a small, thin man, standing 5'7" and barely weighing 120 pounds. His curly blond hair forms a tangled halo about his face and shoulders. His eyes are bright blue, and he rolls them frequently while conversing, at the same time sliding his tongue across his teeth. His thin lips are usually drawn up in a quirky grin.

He is a foppish man who fancies himself a great actor. Aside from his theatrical costumes, Ivan rarely wears the same clothes twice. His costumes include the fittings of a court jester, king, huntsman, paladin, and monk. Twice a week he dons a costume for the day. Armor, weaponry, and similar trappings are fake—merely stage props.

Ivan has a soft, tenor voice, and a high, rapid-fire laugh that makes listeners cringe. Yet at a moment's notice, he can change them both. His laugh slows to a guttural chuckle, or his voice drops to a low, velvety whisper, then booms for dramatic effect. He enjoys such changes, because he thinks they illustrate his theatrical talents. When he speaks, he gestures dramatically to punctuate his words. At times he paces, undulating his arms. Most folk find him quite strange.

Background: Ivan is the only son of Boris Dilisnya, who was the son of Natalia Olszanik Dilisnya. Natalia's distant relatives were visiting Strahd's castle in 351, in anticipation of a great wedding. Feeling ill, some of them left early. As they rode away from the castle, Strahd murdered the remaining guests, and Barovia became part of the Ravenloft demiplane. Those who rode away were spared, but they were trapped in Ravenloft forever.

Boris Dilisnya, Ivan's father, grew up in Barovia. He married Stefania Septow, and they had a daughter, Kristina. In 684, a distant cousin, Camille Dilisnya, became the lord of Borca, and Ivan's family moved to that nearby domain. Camille considered them to be "the wrong side of the family tree"—the side that should be pruned. They won no favors from her.

Five years later, under a dark moon, Stefania bore a second child—a boy, Ivan, who was destined to become lord of Dorvinia. On the same day, Camille Dilisnya gave birth to a girl, whom she named Ivana. The names were coincidental, but the two children were like evil twins. Ivana eventually became lord of Borca.

At 6, Ivan was torturing animals, sometimes to death. At 8, he was playing harmful pranks on his playmates. At 10, he poisoned a servant's child after the culprit stole a pastry. Ivan laughed as the poor waif died. At 12, Ivan poisoned his mother. Although he brags about it now, he managed to make it look like an accident at the time. Only his sister Kristina could expect no harm from him; Ivan loved her deeply, and she, blind to his evil, doted on her "dearest little brother." But she did not remain blind to his evil for long.

When Kristina took a husband, Ivan became intensely jealous. When she gave birth to a child, Ivan felt completely betrayed. He poisoned her husband, then went upstairs and poisoned Kristina as she nursed her infant son. A midwife managed to save the baby.

In 710, his own family chased Ivan to the borders of the Mists. Ivan was 26. Entering them, he found a land to suit his own tastes, created by his own evil. He named the land Dorvinia.

In 712, Ivan took a bride, Lucretia. In 716 he took her life. During their union, Lucretia bore three children. Ivan believes they were stillborn, but some say midwives snatched the babes at Lucretia's request.

Current Sketch: Ivan has never lost his fiendish and childish mentality. As a young man, he had expensive cravings, particularly for fine desserts and rare wines. When he became lord of Dorvinia, Ivan lost his sense of taste. Now, to him, all drinks are like bile, all foods are like dust. He feels the loss keenly, and would sacrifice anyone and virtually anything to regain his palate. He often hosts elaborate banquets, hoping to enjoy the fare vicariously. Guests who know him well feign indifference to the food. If they appear to dislike it, he is offended, but if they enjoy it too much, he is enraged.

It is rumored that Ivan often wakes at night in a cold sweat, calling to Kristina or screaming her name in terror. His attendants dare not mention these events in his presence. Her name is like poison on one's lips—repeat it to Ivan, and

he will make sure the results are fatal.

Combat: Ivan has no combat abilities, but Ravenloft has granted him a deadly power. He can turn any object he touches into poison. He can do this three times a day. Each time, he can choose one of three strengths for his toxin. A "deadly" toxin kills victims who fail their saving throw vs. poison. A "dangerous" one inflicts 4-24 (4d6) points of damage on characters who fail their saving throw. A "malingering" toxin takes hold like a sickness. Within an hour, victims become weak and cannot walk. They remain bedridden for 1-4 days.

Ivan himself is immune to all forms of poison, paralysis, and disease (including magical diseases). In addition to his natural toxins, he can prepare a poison or drug with virtually any effect. His favorite concoction remains in the victim's system for a day, then causes a sudden and violent death. Ivan has an antidote of sorts, but it merely delays the poison's release for another day. He keeps several retainers on this leash. Each day, they need the antidote, or they will die. As long as only Ivan knows the antidote, they must remain loyal to him.

Drakov, Vlad

Lord of Falkovnia
14th Level Warrior, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	by armor	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	14	Con	15
Hit Points	80	Int	15
THAC0	7 (4 w/rod)	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	2 (4 w/rod)	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	1d4+4 or 1d6+4 or by weapon		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	50%		

Vlad is a large, dark man 70 years of age, though he looks no more than 40. He stands 6'3" tall with a wide, heavy frame. His skin is a weather-beaten brown, creased by age and rough living, and his features are coarse. He wears a full, uneven beard, which is streaked with gray. His light brown hair is limp and unkempt. He has brooding blue-gray eyes and a large, hawkish nose. His teeth are even, perfect, and white. His voice is gravelly and low.

Vlad always wears some sort of battle dress. He usually wears chain mail with forearm and shin plates, topped with a black cape. The cape, which is trimmed in white fur, is loosely gathered by a thick leather belt with a massive silver buckle. The buckle is fashioned into a screaming hawk's head, Vlad's personal symbol. A pair of gauntlets hangs from the belt. A sheath for a rod also hangs from the belt, but Vlad usually carries the rod in his right hand.

Background: Drakov hails from the kingdom Thenol, which lies in the realm of Taladas on the planet Krynn. (See the DRAGONLANCE® game accessory *Time of the Dragon* for more information.) In Thenol, Drakov headed a mercenary band known as the "Talon of the Hawk." His nickname was "the Hawk," and his men were called "Talons." He was noted for his ruthless and brutal tactics. He worked for whomever paid him the most money, usually the evil fanatics of Hith.

One evening long ago, Drakov's troupe was leaving the Conquered Lands after a session of looting and pillaging. A fog swelled from the ground as they rode. The Mists carried Drakov

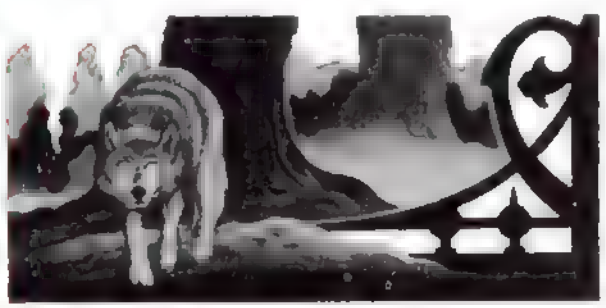
and his men into Ravenloft, depositing them on the edge of Darkon, domain of Azalin the lich.

Drakov believed he had discovered a new land, and set out to conquer a slice of it. He was naive to the demiplane's powers, and, though he knew of Azalin, he underestimated the lich. He began his campaign of terror. His Talons sacked a small village, and Drakov ordered a mass execution of the resisters. As was his habit, he had them impaled on thick pikes, which were then planted in the ground to create a grisly garden of agony. Vlad watched them die, as usual. Then the familiar spectacle changed.

When the last victim ceased to writhe and moan, the bodies turned into zombies. Pulling themselves off the pikes, the creatures attacked Drakov's men. Additional creatures, all dead, began to swarm onto the scene from all sides. In desperation, the Talons fled into the Mists.

A new domain opened up for Drakov. He became its lord. He and his men settled in the new land, and named it "Falkovnia" ("Realm of the Hawk"). It was the year 690. Refugees from Darkon and other territories spilled across the border, hoping for a better existence. Drakov's men enslaved many of them, but allowed others to settle freely.

Vlad has tried to invade Darkon four times since he became the lord of his own domain. Every attempt has failed. Each Talon who perished on Darkonian soil immediately became an undead soldier, which rose to fight against its former comrades. Drakov also has tried to conquer other domains bordering Falkovnia: Lamordia, Dementlieu, Richemulot, Borca, Dorvinia, and G'Henna. Again, he has failed each time. The strength of the enemy lords, who are empowered by the demiplane, make such conquests unrealistic.



Current Sketch: Before Ravenloft took him in, Drakov was just a henchman, hired by rulers who looked down upon "his kind." Their insults burned him. He, too, aspired to rule. Ravenloft gave him what he sought, but not what he truly desired—the respect of other rulers and the strength to instill fear and awe in other lords. His former masters are no longer present to appreciate his position. The lich Azalin is so powerful that he looks down on Drakov just as Drakov's former employers did. None of the other lords give him much thought.

With no lands to conquer, no leaders to impress, Drakov has developed other forms of amusement. His favorite pastime is the observation of a slow death. No matter who or what the victim is, he never tires of the sight. He usually takes his evening meal on the terrace, which overlooks the grounds of his estate. While he dines, at least one victim is impaled on a 10-foot stake. As gravity guides the victim down the pike, the body's descent becomes a sort of meter for the progression of the meal. Occasionally, if Drakov has invited guests to witness the spectacle, an orchestra plays in the background.

Drakov has two other joys: hawking and mock combat. He practices both regularly. The hawks are trained to attack on his command, but he rarely targets their attacks against people. He cherishes the hawks, and prefers not to subject them to potentially deadly counterattacks. Oddly enough, though Vlad has little regard for human life, he cannot abide the suffering of his birds.

Combat: Years of battle have eroded Vlad's strength and endurance. Nonetheless, he is still a match for many younger fighting men. The land gives him might and energy beyond that of a normal person his age.

Vlad is proficient in the use of almost any battlefield weapon. In particular, he is skilled in the axe, bow, mace, flail, many polearms, and the sword. When striding into combat, he prefers to carry a short sword and hand axe on his belt. He is also an excellent horseman.

He chooses his armor to match the situation. While fighting on horseback, he prefers plate mail. On foot, he favors chain mail. In either case, he carries a shield.

He is extremely canny in battle, making superb use of the terrain against his opponent. He willingly stoops to almost any dirty trick and never abides by any rules of combat.

On his left hand, Vlad wears a *ring of free action*. He carries a *rod of flailing* in his right hand, or wears it in a sheath on his belt. The gauntlets dangling from his belt are *gauntlets of ogre power*. He is not known to possess any other magical items.

Vlad finds all magic distasteful, though he uses magical items himself. He despises spells and spellcasters. Ravenloft's dark powers have granted him a magic resistance of 50%. Even healing and other beneficial spells are subject to this resistance.

Godefroy, Lord Wilfred

Lord of Mordent
Ghost, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	0	Str	—
Movement	9	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	10	Con	—
Hit Points	40	Int	14
THAC0	11	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	15
Damage/Attack	nil		
Special Attacks	ages 1d4x10 years		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Lord Godefroy is a ghost. As such he appears most often as a transparent figure. He wears a high-necked, ruffled shirt and a close-fitting black coat with tails. His gray hair is pulled back tightly and worked into a complex knot on the back of his head.

He appears as an old, stooped man in his 70s, his face deeply lined, brows knit together, eyes squinting harshly. He sometimes wears pince-nez (eyeglasses perched on his nose), which are fastened to his coat with a chain. His expression is always severe and unforgiving.

Background: Lord Wilfred Godefroy inherited the Gryphon Hill estate in Mordent. He married Estelle Weathermay, and they had a single child. It was a girl. Godefroy was disappointed. He was an evil man with a vile temper. During a fit of rage, he killed his wife; when the little girl attempted to intervene, he killed her as well. He made it look like an accident in the stable, shooting his best stallion to prove the point.

For the next year, Godefroy was haunted by

the spirits of his wife and daughter until he committed suicide. By his own last request, he was buried in the mausoleum of Heather House, the largest estate in Mordent. His wife and child are buried in the Gryphon Hill cemetery. He did not want their spirits haunting him in death as they had in life.

Godefroy's activity had captured the attention of Ravenloft's powers, but Mordent was not yet a domain. Then Strahd Von Zarovich and Azalin came to Mordentshire, and Mordent became part of Ravenloft. When Strahd and Azalin left, Lord Godefroy was the most powerful evil force in the area. He became its lord, and his powers increased.

Current Sketch: Godefroy is an arrogant, conceited snob. He has a hair-trigger temper and a creative bent toward evil. Today he is a ghost rather than a haunt. He can roam freely around the entire domain, but usually restricts himself to Mordentshire and its surroundings, including Gryphon Hill and the Weathermay estate (Heather House).

This vicious codger fears only his wife and daughter. Each night, Lady Godefroy and her child hunt down Lord Godefroy. They tear at his incorporeal flesh and curse him for their

murders. Lord Godefroy does what he can to hide from them, which is very little. He vents his fear and frustration on those foolish enough to visit Gryphon Hill, which is uninhabited.

Combat: Godefroy is a normal ghost, with the following changes. Any attempt to "turn undead" does not affect him. Furthermore, any undead creature within 100 yards of Godefroy gains a +2 bonus against "turning." No creature leaves Ravenloft (completely entering the ethereal plane) when they become noncorporeal; as a ghost, Godefroy is still anchored to the demiplane.

Gondegal

20th Level Warrior, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	5	Str	17
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	20	Con	16
Hit Points	95	Int	14
THAC0	1 (+1 Str)	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	2	Cha	15
Damage/Attack	3-10 (5-12 w/sword) (1d8+2, or 1d8+4 w/sword)		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	nil		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Gondegal—veteran warrior and leader of mercenaries—is a tall, gray-haired swordsman of considerable skill and intelligence. He looks fortyish, but his exact age is unknown. He usually wears his hair long and loose. He has a drooping gray mustache. He carries himself proudly, perhaps even arrogantly. His badge is a gray wolf's head, face forward, with red eyes. He commonly wears chain mail and always carries a sword. He favors the long sword or two-handed broad sword.

Background: Gondegal lived in Cormyr before he entered Ravenloft. He was a mercenary captain who took the city of Arabel. He tried to carve a nation from the surrounding territory, but failed. He ruled for only a season, which was marked by rebellion and war. He is known as the "Lost King."

In a final battle with the host of Cormyr, Gondegal's mercenary troops abandoned the field. He fled north and then east for many days, until at last he stumbled into a thick fog alone.

When it cleared, he found himself in Falkovnia.

Falkovnia's military structure suited Gondegal at first, but eventually he tired of the oppression and the evil stink of the place. He left to wander the demiplane and seek his fortune. He has had many an adventure since then.

Current Sketch: As of this writing, Gondegal has suffered none of the demiplane's ill effects. He is highly charismatic. He loves adventure and is game for most anything. This does not mean that he is stupid. He does not partake in fool's quests or hopeless ventures.

Combat: Gondegal is a 20th level warrior with proficiencies in the long sword and two-handed broad sword. He rarely fights with a shield. He carries a *long sword +1*, which is +3 against lycanthropes and other shape changers. In Ravenloft, a sword like this comes in handy. Gondegal has depleted or lost all other magical items. He has survived this long in Ravenloft by his wits and courage.

Hazlik

Lord of Hazlan
12th Level Invoker, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	12	Con	10
Hit Points	45	Int	17
THAC0	17	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	9
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	spells		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Hazlik is a man in his 60s. He is completely bald, and his head is tattooed with many strange and arcane symbols. He wears a goatee but no mustache. His left eye is brown, his right eye is blue. Needless to say, he stands out in a crowd.

Hazlik wears robes that are common to the red wizards of Thay. They are red, long sleeved, and cover him from neck to toe. The collar is ruffled, but the robe is open in front, revealing his hairless, tattooed chest. He also wears a silver chain bearing a heavy, round silver pendant, which is adorned with a single yellow gemstone.

Background: Hazlik was once a red wizard of Thay, who was rising quickly through the social and magical ranks. Unfortunately, he made the wrong enemies. His offenses were relatively minor, so they decided not to kill him. Instead, they humiliated him. They kidnapped Hazlik and tattooed his head and body. In Thay, only the women tattoo their scalps.

Hazlik swore vengeance upon his enemies. He devoted himself fully to his craft. This was easy, because the tattooing left him a social outcast. One night, Hazlik was searching the woods for an ingredient vital to an experiment. Mists rose from the ground. He walked onward, and found himself in the Nightmare Lands of Ravenloft. He quickly retreated into the Mists. For months, he dwelled in the fog, nursing his hatred and making plans for his enemies in Thay. He never returned to that realm. The fog lifted, and Ravenloft granted him his own domain, Hazlan.

Current Sketch: Hazlik has an abiding hatred for wizards. He will not tolerate them in his land and eliminates any he finds. He will not take an apprentice.

Each night, he dreams of Thay, and of his humiliation and defeat at the hands of his enemies. In his dreams, he is always weak and cowardly. He dreads sleep, and uses potions and philters to delay the inevitable. Thanks to this magic, he sleeps only once every few days.

Combat: Hazlik has all of the obvious abilities of a 12th level invoker. In addition, he can detect the casting of any magical spell in Hazlan. He can also determine the approximate location of the casting—within 10 miles, minus 1 mile for each level of the spell. For example, he would know a 3rd level spell had been cast somewhere in a circle with a 7-mile radius.

If Hazlik is killed, his life force retreats into the yellow gemstone he wears. Only powerful magic can destroy the stone. Anyone who touches the gem must save vs. spells. A failed save means the character cannot resist wearing the pendant. Once the pendant hangs round his neck, the character will defend it with his life, although nothing else prevents its removal.

Each night, the wearer of the pendant

dreams that he is battling Hazlik. If Hazlik wins this nightmarish struggle, the dreamer dies, and the evil lord invades the victim's corpse. Within a month, the body itself is slowly transformed, until it finally fits the description of Hazlik above, and the evil wizard is completely reborn.

Spell List

1st level: alarm, burning hands, detect magic, enlarge, magic missile, message, phantasmal force, read magic, shield, unseen servant

2nd level: alter self, continual light, detect invisibility, invisibility, knock, flaming sphere, web, wizard lock

3rd level: fireball, fly, item, hold undead, lightning bolt, spectral force, wraithform

4th level: dig, dimension door, fire trap, ice storm, phantasmal killer, polymorph other, stoneskin, wall of fire

5th level: cloudkill, cone of cold, dream, magic jar, passwall, sending, wall of force

Kolyana, Tara

Human (0 Level), Chaotic Good

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	13
Hit Points	6	Int	15
THAC0	20	Wis	17
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	15
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	nil		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Tara is a young, beautiful woman, with startling green eyes, full lips, and dark red hair that tumbles past her shoulders. Her looks charm most men instantly. Her expression is mercurial, changing quickly to reflect her thoughts and feelings. She is of average height and build.

She is always dressed for business—which in her case is hunting and tracking. She dons casual, rugged clothes that allow freedom of movement, usually well-worn leather trousers and a plain, loose-fitting shirt. High boots and a wide belt complete her rather masculine attire.

Background: Tara's family escaped from

Barovia many years ago, and settled in the wilds of Hazlan. Her parents raised her to be good and true—a miracle of sorts, considering her surroundings. They also raised her to be tough. She became an underdog's champion, willing to fight for her cause.

When a wolf was marauding the farms of her village, Tara acted. The villagers intended to kill the beast, but Tara had other plans. She built a sturdy trap to capture the animal. To her surprise, she captured a naked man, one who was afflicted with lycanthropy. The local priest was able to cure him.

Since that day, Tara has wandered through Ravenloft, trying to help those in need and rid her world of evil. She has hunted all manner of supernatural creatures, but is best with lycanthropes and ghosts.

Current Sketch: Tara is extremely idealistic, almost to the point of being naive. She will defend everyone's rights, even a villain's. She sometimes has trouble understanding a creature that chooses to be evil. For Tara, most evil beings are misguided or under some form of curse.

She refuses to take a life or cause harm to another creature. Fortunately, in her mind

destroying an undead creature is freeing its soul, not killing it. To her, unredeemable creatures, such as master lycanthropes, should be imprisoned, not killed.

Combat: Tara has no special combat abilities, but she has a knack for being in the right place, at the right time, with the right tool. It's more than luck. Tara has heavily researched lycanthropes and other supernatural phenomena. She carries a variety of books and protective charms. In particular, she always carries wolfsbane, and wears an *amulet versus undead* (9th level).

Lukas, Harkon

Lord of Kartakass
7th Level Bard and Wolfwere, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	8 (3)	Str	14 (18)
Movement	12 (15, 18 as wolf)	Dex	16
		Con	15 (18)
Level/Hit Dice	7	Int	16
Hit Points	35	Wis	10
THAC0	17 (13), +1 sword	Cha	18
No. of Attacks	1 (2)		
Damage/Attack	2-12/ 1-8(sword)		
Special Attacks	singing		
Special Defenses	iron or +1 weapon to hit		
Magic Resistance	10%		

As a wolfwere, Lukas can assume three different shapes at will: humanoid, half wolf, and dire wolf. The transformation takes only a round. Dire wolf is his natural form, but Harkon does not favor it as heavily as other wolfweres. As a humanoid, he can choose which race to imitate, and can assume both a male and female form. His exact appearance in each race and gender is always the same, however, and is determined by greater powers. In the description above, numbers in parentheses reflect his half-wolf state unless otherwise noted.

In male, human form, Harkon is a bard of exceptional charisma and physical beauty. He stands 6' 2", and is well muscled with perfect proportions. He has thick, wavy black hair, a finely trimmed black beard, and a long, pointy mustache. He frequently wears a fine costume of azure silk trousers, a white ruffled shirt, and a gold coat. A wide-brimmed hat blue, with a white feather tops the costume. The baggy trousers are tucked into shiny, black leather riding boots. Bits of small jewelry—rings, necklaces, etc.—and a wide, black leather belt with silver buckle complete his dress. He may be encountered wearing almost any fancy costume, however. The only constants are a monocle (for which he has a strange affection), an elaborately carved harp, and a sword with a finely crafted basket hilt.

As a female human, Lukas has dark brown eyes, a bewitching smile, and gleaming black hair that falls to the waist. His (or her) feminine beauty is breathtaking. He wears loose scarlet pantaloons tucked in boots, a white, flowing blouse, and a short, open vest of gold brocade.

In half-wolf form, Harkon stands 7 feet tall. His clothes, which fit his human form loosely, can accommodate the change. His head becomes that of a wolf, his body human but covered with fur. He sprouts no claws, but sharp, canine fangs offset the loss.

Background: Lukas grew up in the hills and forests of Cormyr, and was a misfit among wolfweres. He asked too many questions. He hated solitude, which was wholly unnatural. Unlike his chaotic brethren, he made long-range plans. Larger and stronger than most of his kind.

he was left to himself more and more—precisely the opposite of what he desired. When he reached adulthood, Lukas attempted to unify a group of wolfweres into a small tribe. The normally solitary creatures shunned him.

Lukas seethed with rage. He embarked on a killing spree through the farmlands of Cormyr. When his rage cooled, he decided to enter the world of men. He became a wandering minstrel and bard for many years, killing mostly farm animals and vagrants. He felt superior to his kind, but without purpose or significance.

One fog-filled night in a small village, Lukas strolled the streets making evil plans. He was destined for greatness—of that he was sure. If he could not command his fellow wolfweres, he would become a ruler of men in Cormyr. Lost in thoughts of tyranny and despotism, he failed to notice when the village faded away, and the landscape of Barovia took its place. The year was 610 on the Barovian calendar.

The fates had cursed him! Had they not swept him to a strange place in an attempt to rob him of his destiny? Of his strength? He was angry and desperate, and only the warm, familiar taste of blood seemed to calm him. For a long time, he hunted and killed the wolves and werewolves that infested the mountainous landscape. One night, he came face to face with Barovia's vampire lord. Harkon Lukas barely escaped with his life into the Mists. The Mists welcomed him, creating a new domain. In 613, he became the lord of Kartakass.

Current Sketch: Harkon's greatest desire is to rule. He is clever, persistent, and calculating—and quite capable of making long-range plans. Ravenloft gave him an entire domain to rule, and yet, the dark powers filled it with nothing of consequence for him to control. Kartakass has only a few small villages. The forests are filled with normal wildlife. In his eyes, being the lord of Kartakass is a pale shadow of what real rulership means.

Most wolfweres are chaotic, but Harkon's alignment is neutral. Perhaps some vestige of normalcy remains, however, because his personality is subject to change. Usually Harkon is a jovial creature, with an evil twinkle in his eye. Insults and sabre-rattling leave him unperturbed. If thwarted, however, he is subject to extreme mood swings. His fits of rage result in horrible violence and can last for days. He is always quiet and reclusive after such a fit. These periods of calm produce his most audacious plans.

Harkon has an abiding hatred of werewolves and vampires. He has been known to hunt and destroy these creatures—even if the hunt takes years. He has an affinity for humans and elves, but gets along well with any of the humanoid races. However, he never lets such emotions get in the way of a good meal.

Combat: Harkon Lukas has all of the normal abilities of a 7th level bard and a wolfwere. Refer to the *Player's Handbook* and *Monstrous Compendium 1* for details. Only +1 or greater weapons or weapons of iron can harm wolfweres. Most common swords are steel. Only the ancient weapons—or those which have been specifically forged to battle the supernatural—are iron.

The dark powers of Ravenloft have given Lukas one additional ability. If he dies in combat, his spirit enters the body of the nearest dire wolf. The wolf immediately gains all of Harkon's abilities and attributes, including total hit points. Harkon inherits the current state of the wolf's body, including injuries (lost hit points) and spell effects. No one knows what will happen if he dies of old age. It hasn't happened yet, and in Ravenloft, it's possible that it never will. He has survived over 150 years to date.

He can command any normal animal in his land. He usually reserves this honor for the wolves, which are his favorites. This power is his as lord of the domain Kartakass.

Harkon Lukas carries an *elixir of madness*, which he can brew himself. It is a weaker form of the normal potion and its effects can be countered with *neutralize poison* or the equivalent. His favorite tactic is to trick or entice a person to drink it. Once the victim is mad and confused, the wolfwere slowly eats him, trying to keep his victim conscious as long as possible.

The sword he carries is a *cursed berserker +1*, which came from the land itself when Kartakass was born. When faced by enemies in melee, the sword forces its wielder to fight to the death, welding itself to his hand. When the wielder is not in combat, he can remove the sword, and even leave it behind, miles away. But when the wielder faces an enemy again, the sword instantly appears in his hand, and he is forced to fight to the death. The sword only functions this way if Lukas is in human or half-wolf form. If he is in wolf form, he has no hand to hold the

sword. If Harkon is using the weapon, he cannot change to wolf form until the fight is over.

Harkon has learned to live with this curse and has developed strategies to make it work for him. For instance, when he "dies" his life force immediately inhabits the body of the nearest wolf. If he stays in wolf form, he can run if necessary, leaving the blade behind. The blade is permanently tied to him and will not recognize another owner. The next time he faces an opponent, and assumes his human or half-wolf form, the sword appears in his hand.

Lukas often uses the sword to play an evil trick. When he first meets a group of wanderers, he volunteers to leave his sword in the branches of a tree at least 100 yards away—as a sign of his "good will" and "peaceful intentions." If that does not calm his victims, he offers to let *them* hold the sword. He knows that if a fight begins—even if he starts it—the sword will appear instantly in his hand.

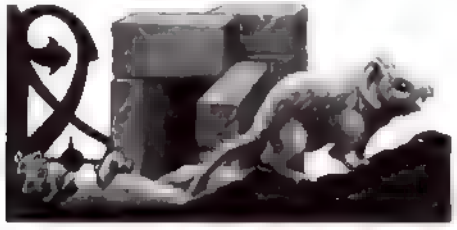
The harp he carries has a simple magical property. When Lukas plays certain melodies of his own composition upon the harp, the music draws 3-12 (3d4) dire wolves from the outlying area. The beasts arrive in 2-12 (2d6) rounds. Once they are within 60 feet of the wolfwere, the dire wolves recognize his scent and obey his commands. As a twisted joke, Lukas sometimes teaches one of these melodies to innocent travellers, and lets them summon their own fate.

As a bard, Lukas has the following abilities: climb walls, 80%; detect noise, 50%; pick pockets, 30%, and read languages, 35%. He also can cast a few simple spells, which are listed below. The mix appears random and unplanned, because he acquires spells as the winds of fortune place them before him.

1st level (3 per day): *tenser's floating disc, grease, phantasmal force, magic missile, enlarge*

2nd level (2 per day): *knock, spectral hand, darkness 15' radius*

3rd level (1 per day): *gust of wind, vampiric touch*



Markov, Frantisek

Lord of Markovia, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	6*	Str	19*
Movement	12*	Dex	18*
Level/Hit Dice	5*	Con	16*
Hit Points	24	Int	17
THAC0	15*	Wis	9
No. of Attacks	2*	Cha	8
Damage/Attack	1-4/1-4 *		
Special Attacks	see below		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

* = variable score

Frantisek is a large man, with thick, heavy bones, broad features, and coarse, straight black hair which he wears slicked back on his head. His eyebrows are large and bushy, his jaw large and wide. His green eyes are fixed open, as if he's afraid to miss any detail. He has a broad, toothy smile, which he flashes often. This smile is far from reassuring. It is threatening and predatory—like a cougar's sudden roar, but silent.

Frantisek always wears a heavy, high-necked robe, which he sometimes adorns with a necklace of human or animal teeth. He appears massive and lumbering, with a broad, slight hunchback. His arms are unusually long, and his legs are visibly bowed beneath his robe.

Background: The Markovs lived in Barovia when Strahd became a vampire. Some of them died in Castle Ravenloft. The others fled to nearby Vallaki. Frantisek grew up on a small pig farm outside the village, surrounded by the forested slopes of Barovia.

Frantisek, or "Frant" as his family called him, butchered swine for sale at market. Frant liked the work, and had a natural talent for it. When he came of age, he married a young woman from the village, and opened a butcher shop there. As time wore on, he became bored with simple slaughter. He began to experiment with the animals, performing surgical amputations, grafts, and glandular injections. They died within a few days, but the hobby cost him nothing. He could still grind the meat for sale.

His wife, a zaftig and kind-hearted gal named Ludmilla, soon discovered his ghastly pastime.

His experiments revolted her. She threatened to leave him and tell the villagers what kind of perverted meat they were buying. Furious at the betrayal, Frantisek made her his next experiment. Ludmilla lived for three days. The townsfolk discovered her body. At first, they thought it was the body of a beast or demon, but eventually reason—and Ludmilla's strange disappearance—led them to the truth. They exiled Frantisek to the Mists. He became lord of Markovia.

Current Sketch: Ravenloft formed a land suited to Markov's nature, and gave him the power to continue his work. He can operate on any creature, and combine it with the aspects of any other species. Most of his experiments have created beast men. The simplest creatures are animals who have acquired human qualities. Others are (or were) humans, who have acquired bestial attributes through Frantisek's handiwork.

Ravenloft also cursed Markov. He must always have the body of a beast, and so, like his creations, he is hideously disformed. Frantisek desperately wants to be a normal human again. He spends long hours in his lab vivisecting animals and transforming them into animal men. Lately, human subjects are in short supply. He longs for more. He hopes that his experiments will give him the knowledge he needs to cure his condition—to make himself man from beast. He is doomed to failure. He can never undo the curse that Ravenloft's powers set upon him.

Combat: Markov is a shape changer who can assume any animal form. The transformation lasts a full round, and he can do it at will. Each change heals 2d6 hit points. He takes on the physical characteristics of the animal he resembles, including hit dice, Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. His mental attributes remain the same (as in the 9th level spell *shape change*).

Ravenloft has imposed some interesting restrictions to this power. Markov cannot assume a true human form. Nor can he take the shape of any humanoid creature (elf, dwarf, half-elf, lizardman, etc.). He can only can assume the form of a normal animal, not of a magical or enchanted creature.

No matter which animal he becomes, however, Frantisek always retains his own human head and face. That means he never gains a biting attack. He can choose to retain his own hands, or assume the paws of the animal he becomes. As a rule, Frantisek chooses the form of a gorilla, because he can still appear human (though bulky and lumbering) beneath his loose robes. In fact, some folk mistake him for a hunchback or a similarly deformed soul, and may pity him. The numbers above reflect his abilities as an ape.

Mordenheim, Victor

Human (0 Level), Lawful Evil

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	10
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	9
Hit Points	55	Int	18
THAC0	20	Wis	7
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	12
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Mordenheim, a scientist and surgeon, is 34 years of age. He is tall for his time—6 feet—and has a wiry, but not athletic, stature. His sharp, pronounced features belie an aristocratic background. (His father was a lord with considerable holdings.) Though his face is still relatively young, an intense obsession with his work has grayed his hair prematurely; only a few faint streaks of the original brown remain. A meager, conservative diet and reclusive lifestyle have left his skin pale and somewhat anemic. His blue eyes are tired and muddied; they rarely blink and have the distant look of a man preoccupied with matters other than those he sees before him.

Tension plagues him. His facial muscles are tight and sometimes twitch; his lips never relax in a smile. The tendons on the back of his hands are taut and raised, and the thin, dry skin covering his knuckles is as white as the bones below. He flexes his fingers when anxious or agitated. He is a man on the edge, and looks it. But when his agitation rises and he seems near a breaking point, the expected rage never comes. Instead, just for a moment, he appears to tremble. Then his fragile composure returns.

Mordenheim has a distinguishing scar and two small deformities. A fall from a tree at age 5 left a scar on his forehead which is still faintly visible today. His left earlobe is missing due to another childhood mishap. At age 10, he was attempting to perform simple exploratory surgery on his father's favorite hound. The dog, not fully drugged by the bowl of wine that young Victor provided, retaliated the moment its skin was cut. Victor's father refused to have the boy's dangling earlobe reattached. Instead, he instructed the family doctor to remove the lobe completely as a lesson to the little surgeon. Another accident, at age 23, claimed the tip of Mordenheim's left ring finger. He severed it himself when using a surgical saw—an error for which he chides himself to this day.

Dr. Mordenheim wears only simple, practical brown woolen suiting, never any of the frills or embellishments others of his social status might acquire. In his lab, he dons a surgical gown to protect his garments from blood and other fluids. He wears no jewelry other than a ring with his family crest, and a gold watch and chain that were given to him by his wife.

Background: Mordenheim is Ravenloft's "Dr. Frankenstein," loosely based on the character from Mary Shelley's classic Gothic novel. He is a gifted scientist and surgeon who became obsessed with the pursuit of knowledge at an early age. Other boys played make-believe and then later played at love; Victor studied the sciences, both modern and arcane. He disdained magic, however, having deemed it "a diversion from Truth."

At 21, Mordenheim married Elise Von Brandthofen, much to the surprise of his family and his handful of friends. Were it not for Elise's own persistence, he would never have met, much less married, her. She was an unusual and intelligent young woman who shared his interest (though not his passion) for Chemistry. She was barren, and therefore could not give him children.

Only a few months after marrying Elise, Victor began his research in the resurrection—or more appropriately, the creation—of human life. Thirteen years later, he accomplished his goal and created a monster. The excerpts from his journal, shown here, recount the tale from his own perspective. It is, like most personal accounts by a man so obsessed, not entirely without flaw.

From the Journal of Victor Mordenheim . . .

19 November '02.—It came to me last night—the secret of all secrets—how to restore life to a limp, soulless vessel, and make it breathe and walk among us. But the vision was shadowy and veiled. I saw the heart of it, but knew not how to make it beat.

31 January '06.—Still the vision haunts me. In the few hours of sleep I allow myself each night, it comes to me, imploring me to lift the veil that surrounds it, a shroud that clings to it as a foolish mother attempts to shield her son from his destiny. The vision remains with me throughout my waking hours. I know I must cast all other thoughts aside, and draw this secret into the light. It is my duty, my calling, because I alone have the skill and intellect to bring this greatest of gifts to mankind.

12 March '10.—Elise, my darling wife, has gone. I have sent her to reside with her cousins in Furchtenberg, despite her protests. It is for the best. Now no one, nothing, can distract me. With each day's work I grow closer; with each night's work I grow closer still. I must not falter now. A storm is coming—a great, dark storm. And I must be prepared to greet it.

6 November '15.—For 13 years I have labored, tireless, devoted. I have performed a thousand experiments—dissections, vivisection, injections—first with mice, then rabbits, then dogs, and finally, men. Now at last I have the answer. I alone fully understand the complex electrochemical alterations which occur in the tiniest particle of a cell. I am drunk with knowledge! I alone know the secret of prompting those alterations in a single cell of a corpse's flesh. I alone can impart the proverbial "spark of life" to its limp, livid tissue—a spark that will spread from cell to cell as a wildfire sweeps across a sun-parched plain.

Tonight, at the height of the storm, when the time was proper and the body correct, I accomplished precisely that. I have created life. He is assembled from the finest parts. His arms are stronger than the arms of Hercules, his legs swifter than the legs of Hermes. His face, grotesque to some, is to me more handsome than the face of Apollo. I will call him Adam. He is my masterpiece, my creation, my manly son. Only wonders can unfold in the days ahead.

13 November '15.—As I suspected, his mind is a blank slate, mine to shape as a father molds the mind of his child. I wanted to share my joy with darling Elise, to make my child—my *brain*child—her own as well. I sent for her, and she has re-

Mordenheim discovered virtually every piece of the puzzle he pursued. On the fateful night, he did indeed have every cell in his carefully constructed corpse primed for revival. But the actual spark, the true wonder, was not an accomplishment all his own. He was dabbling in the work of gods, and the gods, in turn, dabbled in his.

Mordenheim neither worshipped nor believed in any power higher than man. He was a learned atheist who accepted only that which could be proved. He believed neither in evil, nor in good. If he worshipped anything, he worshipped knowledge—particularly his own. It cannot be said that he worshipped wisdom.

At other times, in other places, the gods might have tolerated such blasphemy. As was their way, they might have protected such a man from his own ignorance. But Mordenheim had become a festering sore to their sensibilities. So fierce became his desire to create life, so strong his denial of their existence, that the gods decided to grant his wish. They imbued his foul corpse with a soul that was troubled and twisted, and rife with evil intent. Then the gods relinquished all ties to the surgeon's fate, casting both him and his dark joke of creation adrift.

All souls eventually fall under the sway of a greater power. Mordenheim and his monster were soon reclaimed. On the night the monster first drew breath, Ravenloft's misty fingers began to tingle with anticipation. In the months that followed, they settled into the soil about Mordenheim's castle, until at last they rose from the earth and surrounded it in a kind of deathwatch. When all hope of Mordenheim's redemption was past, the mists withdrew from that primal realm, taking with them the castle and all the players in Mordenheim's deadly plot. Today, they share a domain in Ravenloft.

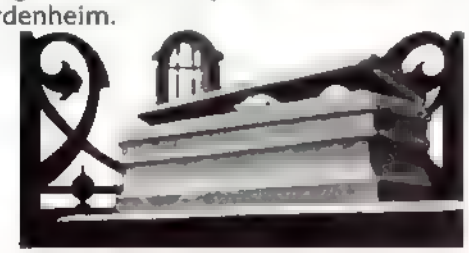
Current Sketch: To the local inhabitants, Dr. Mordenheim is a fiendish madman who conducts unholy experiments in a castle by the sea. They fear him, and credit him with powers that he does not actually possess. They also credit him with crimes he does not commit. It is true that he robs the graveyards and haunts the hospices in search of feminine bodies that are newly cold. He has, perhaps, even arranged a gentle death, using poisons that cause no pain and leave nary a trace. He does not, however, kidnap specimens that are yet warm. That, unknown to most of the populace and Mordenheim himself, is the work of his

"brainchild," the monster he named "Adam." (See "Mordenheim's Monster" for details.)

Mordenheim's days and much of his nights are still devoted to his science. But he no longer seeks to revive the dead. He seeks to restore the living. Elise, what is left of her, still breathes in his laboratory. (It would be a mockery to call it "life.") Compelled by remorse and what must truly now be a madness, he intends to provide her with a new body that all but surpasses perfection. She has regained consciousness only twice since her fateful encounter with Adam. (See sidebar.) In those brief moments, she cried out for her adopted daughter, Eva, and begged Victor to release her from torment. Her heart continues to beat, but not of its own accord. She lives solely through the intervention of Mordenheim's contraptions. Even if he could make her eyes shine with life again, it is doubtful he would see his Elise behind them. Instead, he would behold a creature more horrid to him even than his first experiment has become. But Victor has blinded himself to this—just as he has blinded himself to the fact that his experiments are doomed to failure.

Without the intervention of the gods that spurned him, Victor will never again revive the lifeless. Perhaps some part of him knows this. In his endless quest for perfect parts, in his eternal wait for the perfect moment, he is able to deny the truth: that his work is a failure, that Elise is gone to him forever, and he is as much her murderer as the wretch who struck her down.

Combat: Dr. Mordenheim is not likely to start a fight. He is a surgeon, and has no weapon skills. However, his link to the monster has given him a strange defensive ability. He cannot die unless the monster dies. In fact, he has the hit points of the monster. His body will regenerate from the slightest piece of flesh. The pain from his wounds is felt by the monster. If Mordenheim's body disintegrates completely, his spirit will seek out the fresh corpse of another human male. Within a week, the new body will change until it looks just like the old Dr. Mordenheim.



turned. It is clear the Adam adores her. But she is afraid of him. She claims she stays only to "protect the man she once knew." I am better than the man she knew! She hovers about like a madwoman, wringing her hands, imploring me to destroy him. I would send her away were her face not so sweet to me still. But I know in time she will lose her insane fear, and thrill in Adam's progress as much as I. To appease her, I keep him locked in the tower rooms nearest my laboratory.

17 February '16.—He has exceeded all expectations. Within weeks he was no longer a simpleton, and to date he has attained a level of knowledge some men never attain. His personality is becoming distinct; his will his own. Yet his mind is still childlike. His intellectual progress has far surpassed his social maturation. He appears to be void of any sense of morality. Elise claims he is evil, but that is nonsense. She is simply afraid because he appeared suddenly beside her one night, peering innocently through the bed curtains. Knowledge alone is not evil—and he is purely that, knowledge without experience in the etiquette and necessities of social interaction.

28 February '17.—He is yet the child he should be—genius that he is—but something has changed. At times when I gaze at him I imagine that he is a man older than I am myself. It is as if the soul of a stranger has found a home in the body of my construction. I must divorce myself from emotion in order to address the true problem, his immaturity.

12 March '17.—I cannot take him into the world, so I have brought the world to him. I have found a playmate for Adam. She is perfect—a true foundling, a child of 7 years with no family but our own. She lay in an alley in the village, at the doors of death, and I have rescued her. Elise has nursed her back to health. What a transformation! To know that beneath the bedraggled and filthy little heap I plucked from the street was an angel—a living sweetness, with gleaming blond hair, and dark, sparkling eyes that would melt the coldest heart. How can she help but inspire virtue in our Adam? Elise begs me not to introduce her to him, proclaiming that it is not safe. She threatens to leave me if I do, but I know she will not. Of course I will take the proper precautions, and never leave them unsupervised. I will watch them carefully and observe Adam's progress. I have named the girl Eva.

2 April '17.—The weather is queer. For two days our castle has been cloaked in a dense fog. By day, the light is eerie, gray. By night it is darker still. Yesterday evening I stepped outside for a mo-

ment, but could see nothing beyond the tips of my fingers. All around was the sound of water dripping from the trees. Today the mists appear lighter. Perhaps tomorrow they will lift altogether. They seem to affect Adam. He is agitated, and I can hear him pacing in his chambers.

4 April '17.—Hell has descended upon us. Last night I awakened to the sound of screams. They emanated from Eva's chamber, echoing down the vast hall that separated it from our own room. I rushed in and found Elise crumpled beside the empty bed, her body broken and bent. Her face was tense with pain, and her wide eyes were fixed upon the corner of the room. Eva was missing.

Then I saw Adam, his eyes wild with fury. He stepped out of the shadows. He held a small piece of cloth—tattered white linen, with lace that was flecked with red. It was the lace from Eva's night-clothes. I lunged at him. Instead of meeting his hard, massive form, I fell into a void, my hands striking only shadows before I crashed to the floor. I saw him plunge through the open window three stories from the ground. I stood at the casing, amazed, and watched his dark form disappear into the mists.

9 April '17.—I have not slept for days. Elise awakened briefly today, calling for Eva. I keep her sedated so that she will not realize her condition.

27 April '17.—Today I must remove another part to save the whole. There is little left of darling Elise, yet under my constant care she lives. I have not ventured from the castle in weeks. I do not know what became of Eva; the truth is too horrid to contemplate. Adam is gone forever, of that I am sure. I do not care what becomes of him. Another purpose drives me now. Elise must be restored.

The vigil seems to have affected my vision; outside the landscape looks blurred and strange. Today I must leave to begin the grim search. Only perfection will suffice. It will be the last construction by this architect of flesh. But I will not rest until it is done, and I have atoned for the hell I have brought upon her.

Mordenheim's Monster, "Adam"

Lord of Lamordia, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	20
Movement	15	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	12	Con	20
Hit Points	55	Int	16
THAC0	9 (6 w/wpn.)	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	2	Cha	2
Damage/Attack	2-16 (+8 w/weapon)		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	+1 magical weapon to hit		
Magic Resistance	25%		

The monster, Adam, is a patchwork of body parts from different human corpses—each part perfect, the whole grotesque. Large, raised scars crisscross his body and face like the lines on a distorted jigsaw puzzle. He is an enormous, tremendously powerful man, standing over 7 feet tall.

Adam's skin is gray and pale, and too thin to conceal the play of muscles and arteries below. At the edge of his eyes and mouth, the skin is bluish and shrivelled. His hair is raven black, flowing long and wild to his shoulders. Thin, straight black lips frame his perfect, pearly white teeth. His watery blue eyes look too small for the sockets; the lids scarcely cover them, and the eyeballs seem loosely anchored.

Background: Dr. Victor Mordenheim created Adam. For the grisly details, consult the excerpts from the doctor's journal and the "background" of Victor Mordenheim above. The night Adam fled into the mist—after crushing Mordenheim's wife and causing the disappearance of the young girl, Eva—he became the true lord of Lamordia. The land welcomed him.

Current Sketch: Adam has control over the borders and is the most powerful character in his domain. He is not Lamordia's political leader, however. Baron Von Aubrecker, a member of local aristocracy, is the apparent ruler. The Baron and the natives in Lamordia believe they dwell in a land whose history reaches back to the beginnings of time. Perhaps they do. But until Adam and Dr. Mordenheim became part of Ravenloft, Lamordia did not exist in the demiplane.

The monster lives as a recluse, usually dwelling in a cave on the Isle of Agony. He is immune to cold and needs little food or water to sustain him. Hence, he can live as wildly and freely as an animal. But he does not want to be an animal. He wants to be human. He is bitter and frustrated, and when the frustration builds, it gives way to violence and evil.

Adam despises Dr. Mordenheim, but cannot bring himself to harm him. The land has bound them together in body and spirit. The monster feels the doctor's physical pain, and the doctor, in turn, shares the monster's eternal anguish.

Combat: As the true lord of Lamordia, Adam has been granted many powers by the land. He is immune to natural cold and electricity, but takes half damage from magical attacks of this type. Other damaging spells harm him normally. Spells that do not cause immediate damage are absorbed; he can use their energy to regenerate hit points—1 point for each level of the spell. Adam also is immune to normal weapons and physical attacks. Only magical weapons can harm him.

The monster resembles neither a flesh golem nor a lumbering dolt with neck bolts. He is extremely nimble, swift, and clever, using the terrain to superb advantage. He is a creature accustomed to living at the edge of another man's world, and thus is willing to retreat if danger is present, allowing the land and its shadows to conceal him. Time is meaningless to Adam; he always can return to fight another day.

The monster prefers guerilla tactics to full frontal assaults. Like a thief, he can hide in shadows and move silently, with an 80% chance of success. He can also detect noise and climb walls with same odds. While moving silently, his movement rate is halved, not cut to a third. If he absorbs an opponent's spell, he may pretend that the spell has worked, using the falsehood to position himself for an escape or a surprise attack. He has a 50% chance of knowing which spell has been cast upon him.

Adam is tightly linked to his creator, Dr. Victor Mordenheim. He can feel any pain inflicted upon the doctor, though it does not affect his ability to fight or move.

Petrovna, Yagno

Lord of G'Henna
11th Level Priest, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	13
Movement	12	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	11	Con	14
Hit Points	45	Int	12
THAC0	20	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	18
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	poison touch (see below)		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Yagno has a long, pale narrow face with features that are more like thin lines than three-dimensional protrusions. His eyes usually are opened just a slit, and appear pink because they are bloodshot. His thin lips spread into a wide, flat grimace.

Yagno always wears priestly garb, of which there are many different types. He usually wears red or orange silk robes like other clergy in G'Henna. A tight-fitting hood leaves only his face

exposed. Atop the hood, he wears a cap with strange, stiff folds. A braided cord worked with beads drapes over his left shoulder and runs under his right arm like a sash. The smallest beads are human teeth.

Background: The Petrovna family lived in Barovia when the region became part of the Ravenloft demiplane. Some of them are buried in Castle Ravenloft. Others managed to survive a few generations in the mountains, away from that evil castle. Isolation led to inbreeding.

Yagno was born in 674. Even as a child, his family described him as "not right." His brothers humiliated and beat him. Alone, or skulking in corners, Yagno babbled to imaginary people and cowered before imaginary beasts. At age 22, he built an altar in a cave and began sacrificing animals there. At 27, he attempted to do the same to his sister's newborn child. The Petrovna family chased him into the Mists. Ravenloft welcomed Yagno and made for him a land in which he could continue where he left off in Barovia—worshipping a false god of his own creation.

Current Sketch: Yagno believes that he is in communication with a powerful creature named Zhakata. His entire domain is built around the worship of this false god.

Combat: Yagno is an 11th level priest of Zhakata and a master of the dagger. (Zhakata is not real; Ravenloft grants Petrovna his spells.) His spheres are *all*, *charm*, *combat*, *elemental*, *healing* (reversed only), and *summoning*. He has a special ability that allows him to change a humanoid into a mongrel man (see the *Monstrous Compendium 2*). He can do this three times a day merely by raking his fingers across their temple and chest. There is no saving throw. Yagno can reverse the process at any time with another touch, although he never does. The only way to be restored is by a *polymorph other* spell or by removing the curse during a wind storm. To date, he has only transformed natives of Ravenloft in this manner; it is suspected that he cannot transform visitors from other realms with the same success.

Yagno's voice is charmed. When he speaks, anyone listening for more than 10 minutes must save vs. spells or become loyal to him and Zhakata. Each full day that passes, another saving throw is allowed to break the enchantment. The charm helps Yagno ensure his followers' loyalty.

Renier, Jacqueline

Lord of Richemulot
Wererat, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (6 in rat form)	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	3 + 1	Con	15
Hit Points	16	Int	15
THAC0	17	Wis	9
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by silver or +1 mag. weapon		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Jacqueline is a wererat, beautiful but sinister in human form, with just a hint of ratlike features. Her hair is black and sleek, her eyes green with flecks of gold. She tends to dress simply, avoiding extravagance.

Background: Jacqueline was a young girl when her family discovered a portal into Ravenloft. A team of dogs and vigilante swordsmen was pursuing them through the sewers beneath the city. In desperation, the

family fled deeper into the labyrinth, into the forbidden, unexplored catacombs. The barking of hounds and the bellowing of the wererats' pursuers echoed throughout the labyrinth. Finally, the Reniers were cornered. Before them lay certain death by a glowing sword. Behind, in an open vault, lay a strange portal filled with Mists. They chose the Mists.

The family entered Ravenloft on the borders of Falkovnia. They quickly made their home in the passages beneath the town of Silbervas. Many years later, Drakov finally tired of the wererats' murders and pilfering. He dispatched a huge expeditionary force, which swept through the sewers, exterminating every creature or man they encountered. Some of the wererats escaped to the countryside; the Reniers were among them. Drakov had anticipated this flight. His horsemen were ready. The Reniers fled into the Mists with pounding hooves only a few strides behind them.

The mists opened up new lands for her and her family. Jacqueline's grandfather, Claude, became lord of Richemulot. The family found the land to their liking; it appeared complete with cities and sewers. Jacqueline was a dark, shining star, schooled well by her evil father. In 726, she murdered him and took control of the domain. Since then, the population has grown with the arrival of refugees from other lands.

Current Sketch: Jacqueline is domineering, manipulative, and mean. She revels in her animal nature. Rats, when in season, are lusty creatures; so is Jacqueline. Her curse in Ravenloft is to automatically revert to a ratman form when confronting anyone she loves. Normally, this would not affect her; wererats usually do not form bonds of love and marriage. But it also has been Jacqueline's curse to fall in love. She is enamored of a human male named Henri DuBois. Since her last unsuccessful attempt to make him her wererat slave, his whereabouts are unknown.

Combat: Jacqueline enjoys all of the normal powers ascribed to a wererat. In addition, she can become a foul-smelling mist at will. She does not, however, smell like a sewer when in human form, and neither do members of her family. If wounded to the point of death, she automatically assumes gaseous form and flees. Jacqueline regains 1 hit point per day while in this form. She remains gaseous until her total hit points rise above 0 once more.

Regardless of form, Lord Renier can climb any surface including glass. She even can cling to the ceiling. When not in human form, she can gnaw through virtually any material given time. Anyone she injures has 10 times the normal chance (10% per point of damage) of becoming a wererat under her control.

Timothy, Alfred

Lord of Verbrek
Werewolf and 6th Level Priest, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	10 (5)	Str	10 (16)
Movement	12 (15)	Dex	12 (15)
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	14 (18)
Hit Points	35	Int	12
THAC0	18 (15)	Wis	18
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	2-8 (2d4)		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by silver or +1 magical weapon		
Magic Resistance	25%		

In human form, Timothy is a young man who looks slightly frail. The appearance is deceiving, for as a werewolf, Timothy is not weak. In every form he wears a gold necklace with a small pendant shaped like a crescent moon.

Background: Alfred is the son of Nathan Timothy, lord of Arkandale and riverboat merchant. Alfred believed that his father was overly tolerant of humans and was jealous of his father's power. Lord Nathan paid him little attention. Alfred left Arkandale as a young man. For a while, he wandered through Ravenloft, much as his father had done before him, seeking his fortune and fate.

One night, after many hours of slaughtering sheep, his life changed. Sated and drowsy, Alfred was easily captured by superstitious townsfolk. They were about to burn him alive when a band of gypsies came upon the scene. The gypsies bought Alfred. Their leader agreed to set him free if he vowed to grant safe passage to any gypsies he might encounter during his lifetime. He agreed. The gypsy leader had foreseen his future, and knew it well. When Timothy decided to tempt fate, and moved to attack her, he found

himself engulfed in the Mists of Ravenloft. He became lord of Verbrek.

Current Sketch: Alfred despises his own human form, and believes his bestial nature is divine. He is the high priest of the wolf god. First inspired by the tales of the villagers in Arkandale, Alfred came to believe that he could talk to the wolf god. When Verbrek opened up, his dreams became reality.

Alfred hates all intelligent creatures except werewolves and dire wolves. They are blasphemous heathens according to the creed of his wolf god. He only tolerates the gypsies because of his debt to them. Truth be told, he also tolerates them out of fear.

Combat: Alfred conforms to all the normal werewolf abilities with the following exceptions. He is 25% resistant to all magic. He is a 6th level priest of the wolf god. His spheres are All, Animal, Charm, Divination, Plant, and Summoning, with major access to all. Due to his high Wisdom score, each day he can cast five 1st level spells, five 2nd level spells, and three 3rd level spells. Timothy's spells undergo the changes noted in Chapter IX. It appears, therefore, that the wolf god grants his spells, not the dark powers of Ravenloft. (If Ravenloft granted his spells, they probably would work without penalty.)

When the moon has risen, Alfred can use any dark shadow as a *dimension door* to any other moonshadow within range. This is an ability granted by Ravenloft, and does not affect the number of spells he can cast each day.

Timothy, Nathan

Lord of Arkandale
Werewolf, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (5)	Str	15(18/25)
Movement	12 (15)	Dex	13 (17)
Level/Hit Dice	5+4	Con	13 (19)
Hit Points	40	Int	16
THAC0	15	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	12
Damage/Attack	2-8 (2d4) or by weapon		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by +1 or greater magical weapon		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Nathan has curly, black hair, a full beard, and a sinister, predatory grin. He is middle aged and has an average height and build. As a werewolf, he can assume the form of a man, man-wolf, or dire wolf. The numbers in parentheses above reflect his man-wolf form.

He rarely dresses in finery, preferring the simple garb of a sailor or river boat captain. His hands are calloused and his face brown from working many hours in the sun. He always carries a dagger, used as a tool more often than as a weapon.

Background: Nathan Timothy is the son of Eowin Timothy, a powerful werewolf still living in Mordent. As a young man, Nathan had an incredible urge to wander, to keep moving, as if he believed that by traveling from land to land he could somehow escape the demiplane. He left a trail of carcasses in his wake. Several years later, with no place left to ravage and explore, he entered the Mists of Ravenloft. Arkandale was formed, and he became its lord.

Current Sketch: Nathan is shrewd, devious, and heartless. Unable to leave Arkandale, he must satisfy his wanderlust by sailing up and down the River Musarde. (In fact, he hardly can leave the river itself; see "combat" below.) By his own arrangement, no other boat is safe on the river. Werewolves attack other craft. This allows Nathan to charge stiff fees for shipping cargo through Arkandale.

Combat: Nathan has the normal combat abilities of a werewolf, with the following exceptions. Only magical weapons can harm him, regardless of the form he takes. Silver has no effect. When wounded, he can regenerate 3 hit points per round. He cannot regenerate acid or poison damage, although he gains a +1 bonus to his saving throw vs. poison, because his Constitution is high. Like a troll, he can regenerate hit points even if he loses them all, which makes him very difficult to kill.

Ravenloft has given Nathan great power, but it also has cursed him. He must spend most of his life over water, confined within the boundaries of his own domain. In the forests, carnivores experience the thrill of the hunt; Nathan hears their excited howls and feels a pulling at his gut, but he cannot leave his watery prison. Every hour that he is not on the water, he loses 1 hit point. When his total hit points drop to 0, he does not die, but must lie in agony until

someone carries him to the River Musarde or one of its tributaries. He once lay helpless for a month before a servant discovered his plight.

Ubel, Ratik

9th Level Thief & Revenant, Neutral

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	17
Movement	9	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	18
Hit Points	52	Int	14
THAC0	13	Wis	6
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	1
Damage/Attack	2-16 (2d8) or by weapon		
Special Attacks	paralyzation gaze		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Ratik is a revenant, a murder victim who has risen from the grave as a vengeful spirit who seeks to destroy his killer. Like other revenants described in the *Monstrous Compendium* FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Appendix, Ratik is an undead creature who appears as a spectral version of his body after it has suffered some of the ravages of death.

He is a thin man about 5'9" tall, who moves gracefully. Ratik shows only subtle signs of decay, and from a distance, looks normal. In close proximity, an observer can see that his skin is abnormally pale and almost transparent. His flesh is cold and clammy. The sunken eyes are dull and heavy-lidded. Most of his hair has fallen out; the remaining clumps are white. He bears an aura of sadness, anger, and determination.

Ratik wears loose garments, all of them black. His black hood can be drawn close, concealing his face in the shadows.

Background: Ratik was a skilled thief operating in Il Aluk, the largest city in Ravenloft, and capital city of Darkon. He had many enemies, any one of which could have killed him. He was attacked while he slept. The assailant remains unknown. Before he died, Ratik glimpsed a flash of yellow cloth—a scarf perhaps.

Current Sketch: Ratik wanders Ravenloft as an undead creature, seeking his killer. The yellow cloth is his only clue. In life, his alignment was chaotic evil, but death has forced him into a neutral state of mind. Long ago, greed guided his every action. Now, he wants only to avenge his death. He shows little emotion unless he learns something about the person who killed him.

Ratik occasionally may stray from his mission and become drawn into other conflicts, but he always moves on. He can talk, but he is reluctant to deal with the living. Ratik believes he will know his killer when he finds him—or her.

Combat: Like other revenants, Ratik cannot be turned, raised, or resurrected. He usually attacks by hooking his hands around his victim's throat. This strangulation causes 2d8 points of damage each round. If Ratik stares into his killer's eyes, that person must roll a successful saving throw vs. spells or be paralyzed with terror for 2d4 rounds. (Only his killer is affected by the gaze.) If Ratik is dismembered, the severed parts act independently, as though guided by Ratik's mind. His willpower causes the parts to reunite. Magical weapons and acid may cut apart his body, but they cannot destroy him.

Ravenloft has extended Ratik's powers far beyond those of his cousins in the Forgotten Realms. His body does not decay at all. Even if his body is completely burnt, his spirit will

inhabit a nearby fresh corpse, which inherits all of his abilities. He cannot be destroyed until he avenges his murder.

Unlike most revenants, Ratik has retained all his old thievish skills, and has combat values at least those of an 8 HD monster. The scores shown above reflect his current status as an undead creature. His thief skills are as follows:

Pick Pockets	95%
Open Locks	45%
Find/Remove Traps	5%
Move Silently	80%
Hide in Shadows	75%
Detect Noise	25%
Climb Walls	95%
Read Languages	0%

Van Richten, Dr. Rudolph

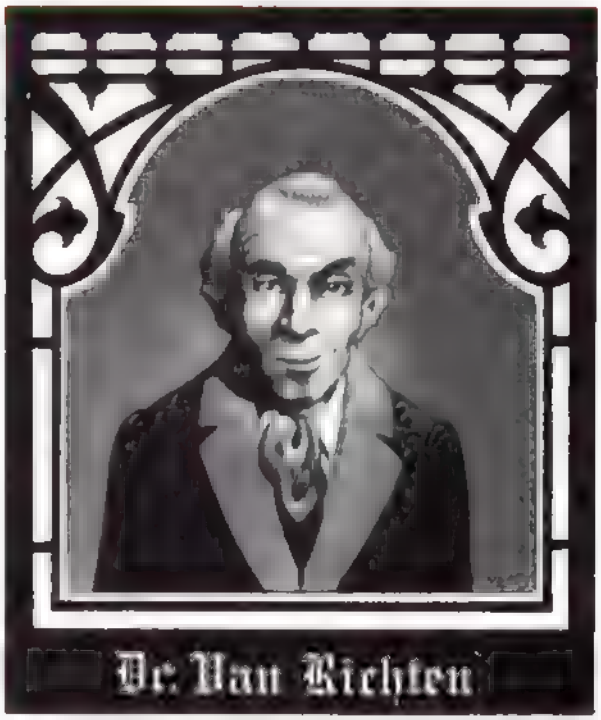
3rd Level Thief, Lawful Good

Armor Class	10 or by armor	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	3	Con	10
Hit Points	11	Int	17
THAC0	19	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	13
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Dr. Van Richten is a middle aged man, small and thin. His short blonde hair is sparse but well groomed. He is meticulously neat. He grins with only one side of his mouth and usually has a hopeful, lively sparkle in his eyes.

Background: Originally a native of Darkon, Van Richten was a doctor who healed without magic. He had little skill as a surgeon, relying more on herbal medicines. Gypsies kidnapped his son, and took the boy out of Darkon. Van Richten pursued them, committing everything to regain his son. (Crossing the border did not reveal any "true past" to Van Richten. Darkon only affects the memories of characters who are born elsewhere.)

Eventually Van Richten caught up with his son—what remained of him. The gypsies had sold the boy to a vampire in Richemulot, who wanted a young, pure companion. Newly undead, the boy



begged Van Richten to destroy him. He told his father how to accomplish the deed, and Van Richten released his son from torment.

Current Sketch: Since his son's destruction, Van Richten has hunted vampires and other supernatural creatures throughout Ravenloft. He has never attempted to destroy the lord of any domain. When not actively in pursuit of a creature, he runs an "Herbalist's Shop" in Mordentshire.

Dr. Van Richten is wise and well educated, and knows much about supernatural lore. He will not allow an innocent person to be hurt, perhaps even if it means sacrificing himself. Fortunately, he has not faced this fatal decision to date.

Combat: Van Richten always carries a holy symbol, a vial of holy water, a small mirror, a silver dagger, and a wooden stake. When hunting prey, he carries other appropriate items, too. He rarely faces an opponent in direct combat, preferring to outwit the evil creatures and use their inherent weaknesses against them.

Through experience and necessity, Van Richten has mastered some thievish tricks. His skills are defined below. The "read languages" score is extremely high because of his scholarly background.

Pick Pockets	15%
Open Locks	40%
Find/Remove Traps	65%
Move Silently	10%
Hide in Shadows	5%
Detect Noise	15%
Climb Walls	60%
Read Languages	70%

Uhorishkova, Natalia

Werewolf, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (5)	Str	17
Movement	12 (15)	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	4+3	Con	18
Hit Points	23	Int	12
THAC0	17	Wis	8
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	2-8 (2d4)		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by silver or +1 magical weapon		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Natalia is an itinerant werewolf. In human form, she has short, dark brown hair and black eyes, with heavy eyebrows and full, red lips. Her features are pointed and sharp, yet still attractive. She appears to be in her mid-twenties

She wears a variety of outfits, all chosen for unrestricted movement and quick removal. In the wild woods, she wears scant clothing or none at all to ease her wolfish transformations.

Background: Natalia was born in Arkandale. Like her mother and father, she is a true werewolf. They preferred to live in the shadows of human society, killing in secret, and avoiding civilization. Natalia wanted to stand in the light and revel in her power.

She left her family to wander the lands of Ravenloft. Natalia was brazen and bold. She killed when and where it pleased her, paying no heed to the circumstances. She would change to a wolf in broad daylight on a busy street. Snatching up a nearby stroller, she would enjoy a grisly feast on the cobblestones, daring anyone to stop her.

Current Sketch: Not long ago, Natalia ran afoul of Dr. Van Richten, who nearly destroyed her. Now Natalia is more cautious, though she is still bolder than her parents taught her to be. She hides her bestial identity, but does not conceal the remains of her kills. She avoids Arkandale, and has no desire to return to her family.

Natalia constantly seeks out new experiences and sensations, driven by an intense, desperate need she does not understand. Blood and pain excite her; even her own is sometimes thrilling. As a human woman, she is mysterious and sensual. She easily lures foolish men to remote locations, where she can toy with them before delivering a fatal blow. More satisfying still is the seduction of intelligent victims.

Combat: Natalia has all the normal abilities of a werewolf. If she senses that she is being tracked, she may create a few werewolves to help her. She becomes the master of such diseased victims, and they are completely subservient to her. Once the danger is over, she abandons them.

Von Zarovich, Strahd

Lord of Barovia
16th Level Necromancer, Vampire, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	1 (−1 w/cloak)	Str	18/76
Movement	12, Fl 18 (C)	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	16/11 + 1	Con	17
Hit Points	55	Int	18
THAC0	11 (8 w/wpn.)	Wis	17
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	5-10 (d6+4) or by weapon (+6 Strength bonus)		
Special Attacks	energy drain, spells, charm gaze		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	15%		

Strahd is a tall man, standing 6'1". His body is lean and hardened from long years as a warrior. His face is gaunt, with strong features and prominent cheekbones. His eyes are dark and hypnotic, like deep pools with subtle reflections of red light. When he is aroused or enraged, the eyes burn like red-hot coals. His skin is usually pale, but becomes flushed with each feeding and retains its healthy color for several hours.

When he became lord of Ravenloft, Strahd's ears developed points, like the ears of an elf. The deformity is subtle, however, and he can readily disguise it by combing his hair over the tips. Sometimes he claims to be a half-elf to explain them, although this is false.

His fingers are elongated and thin, with long, sharp nails. If he wishes to conceal the nails, he wears soft, gray lambskin gloves. Like most vampires, his fangs are not obvious unless he wants them to be noticed. He can speak and even yawn without attracting undue attention. When he is aroused or attacking, the fangs lengthen, until they protrude over his lower lip.

Strahd tends to wear black, with touches of white and red. His clothing style is the tailored, layered look common to ancient Barovian nobles. He wears a single piece of jewelry, a large red stone on a heavy gold chain around his neck.

Background: Strahd calls himself the "first vampyr." The claim seems unlikely, given the diversity and spread of these creatures. He is certainly the first vampire in Ravenloft. His story begins long ago. The complete details are set down in the Tome of Strahd, which appears in Chapter II. We will only summarize the story here.

When still a living man, Strahd was a warrior noble who was once good and just. His armies thundered across the land uniting many countries. The years of death and war slowly changed him. He found himself bitter, past his youth, and brooded about his death. He settled in the land of Barovia, in a world now forgotten, to rule. He and his family made their home in a castle on a precipice—a castle called Ravenloft. Strahd ruled Barovia with a harsh hand, grinding the population into the dust. But he was not fully a part of the demiplane Ravenloft.

Strahd's younger brother Sergei was betrothed to Tatyana, a girl from the valley. Strahd loved her himself and could not bear to let another man, even his brother, have her. So powerful was this emotion that he made a pact with a dark power—Strahd says with Death itself. He sealed the pact by murdering his own brother, just hours before the wedding. Strahd became undead. By the Barovian calendar, it was spring of the year 351.

Tatyana spurned him, and he pursued her until she fell from the battlements. The castle guards, knowing his evil state, attempted to kill Strahd. They could not. He had become undead, a vampire. He murdered most of the wedding guests and many of the castle staff.

It is not known exactly how or why Barovia entered the demiplane of horrors—whether it was Strahd's pact, the murderous rampage, or a curse in the land of Barovia itself. Perhaps it was all three. But Barovia did enter the demiplane, and became its first domain. Like Strahd's castle, the demiplane became known as Ravenloft. (To avoid confusion, the castle is always referred to as Castle Ravenloft; "Ravenloft" alone describes the demiplane.)

In time, the land changed to reflect Strahd and his curse. Barovia expanded, encompassing several valleys in the Balinok Mountains. A ring of choking fog encircled the town of Barovia and Castle Ravenloft. Strahd's control over the creatures in Barovia grew strong. He was truly the lord of his domain.

Prior to his fall from grace, Strahd had been a mage of mediocre skill. Now he dedicated himself to death, becoming a powerful necromancer. He had little else to do with his time, being trapped in the demiplane of Ravenloft. He explored the ways of death, learning about his vampiric nature and powers.

In 470, a band of gypsies led by Madame Eva entered Barovia. She and her kind had a natural resistance to the powers of the land, and Strahd was in awe. Eva and Strahd struck a deal. Strahd would keep them from harm (his own), if the gypsies would agree to search for a portal that would release him from the demiplane. Strahd gave Madame Eva the formula that counteracts the effects of the deadly fog.

In 542, Azalin the lich entered Ravenloft. (See "Azalin" above for details.) Reluctantly he agreed to serve the vampire lord. Strahd required two things of the lich: that he teach the vampire great magic and use his powers to find an escape from Ravenloft. After years of experimenting, Azalin managed to transport himself and Strahd into Mordent. They believed they had escaped to the material plane, but Mordent had become part of their familiar prison, the demiplane Ravenloft. The year was 579. Neither Strahd nor Azalin can remember what happened to them in Mordent; it is like a misty dream to them now. According to legend, they became entwined with the experiments of an alchemist, who had invented a magical apparatus that could divide and transfer souls.

Eventually, Azalin became the lord of Darkon. The years have passed, and Barovia still stands. The original Barovian calendar still marks the passage of time in the demiplane. Not much has changed, including Strahd himself. Only the gypsies can enter and leave Barovia safely; their pact with Strahd still stands. Unfortunately for Strahd, he can never leave.

Current Sketch: Strahd is a ruthless, cold, calculating genius. Everything he does is toward some ultimate goal. Strahd never takes anything at face value. He always has a contingency plan (or two) for any situation. As an undead creature, time means nothing to him. He is more patient than any mortal. When role-playing Strahd, never let him give away hints or clues. He always plays his cards close to his chest. His plans should include anything the players may think up.

He has only two weaknesses. He has been powerful for so long that he underestimates the abilities of normal humans. He is egotistical, but does not let foolish pride endanger him. It does not bother him in the least to retreat before an opponent. His second weakness is his greatest: his eternal "love" for Tatyana. Her body was never found after she plunged from the precipice. Through the years, there has always been one woman in Barovia who resembles her so closely that she could only be Tatyana's reincarnation. Finding that woman, obtaining her, and winning her love is Strahd's obsession.

Strahd would do almost to regain Tatyana. He will not act blindly or foolishly for her, but is willing to take calculated risks. She is the only thing that can bring emotion to his soul.

Strahd maintains relationships with the gypsies, and a few of the other lords in Ravenloft. He treats them like pieces on a chess board, to be manipulated toward a goal. The gypsies are his primary source of information from other lands. They also conduct trading and purchases for him. He cares nothing for his descendants, servants, or minions.

The demiplane has given Strahd many powers. For example, he has a horse-drawn carriage that rides the roads of Barovia at his whim. The carriage can wait and pick up or drop off people, although it has no driver. Strahd can sense the presence of thinking creatures near the carriage and knows whether or not they are inside it. He cannot read their minds or tell anything about them, however. Additional powers are detailed below.

Combat: Strahd is formidable. He has all of the common vampire abilities, such as draining levels by touch, charm by gaze, etc. (Refer to the vampire entry in Volume 1 of the *Monstrous Compendium* for detailed information.) As a 384-year-old vampire, however, he is considerably stronger than his common cousins. He is immune to garlic and mirrors. (He still doesn't cast a reflection, but the mere presence of a mirror doesn't bother him.) Any victim of his charming gaze must save vs. charm with a −3 penalty. He can withstand up to 10 rounds of sunlight without suffering damage, although an 11th round would destroy him.

Weapons must have a +2 or greater magical bonus to harm Strahd. When he wields a weapon himself, he is not restricted to his character class of wizard. As a vampire, he can wield any weapon. With his exceptional Strength, he gains a +3 bonus to attack rolls and a +6 bonus to damage.

Strahd has many types of minions. He can mentally summon their aid at any time. These creatures arrive in 2-12 (2d6) rounds. He can summon 10-100 (d10x10) bats or rats, or 3-18 (3d6) worg wolves. The bats cannot attack, but they do confuse, obscure vision, and foil spellcastings. He also can summon 1-10 Strahd zombies or 2-20 (2d10) Strahd skeletons.

Through his necromantic magic, Strahd has created other powerful minions. Undead created by Strahd tend to be very difficult to turn—more than their hit dice would normally indicate. This is a gift from the dark powers of Ravenloft.

As a master vampire, Strahd has created other vampires, most of them female. It is his habit to destroy these lesser vampires after a year or so. He cannot allow too many vampires to prey on the populace or plot to overthrow him. Strahd rarely creates male vampires.

Unlike other bloodsuckers of his kind, Strahd does not need permission to enter any home or building in Barovia. In a sense, Strahd *is* the land; his bond is so tight that he needs no invitations to explore his domain.

As lord, he can control many inanimate objects in Barovia. For example, it is known that he can open or close the two main gates on the Old Svalich Road merely by thinking about it. He can be anywhere in Barovia at the time. He has a similar power over the main entrances to Castle Ravenloft. He can sense the passage of any thinking creature through these gates. Once the creature has passed through the gate, he loses track of them, however. Anyone entering from the Mists does so without his knowledge.

The full extent of Strahd's power over objects is not known. It may be that these powers change to suit the whim of some darker power. On the other hand, Strahd may have such control over all his direct possessions.

During daylight, Strahd falls into a coma and appears dead to all normal or magical tests. He can sleep anywhere within Barovia and recover his hit points. He prefers coffins, but any resting place free of sunlight will do.

Today Strahd is an accomplished 16th level necromancer. In life, he was merely a 5th level mage. The demiplane Ravenloft converted his skills to necromancy, and his skills have steadily grown. As a necromancer, Strahd can memorize one extra spell per level, provided the spell belongs to the necromantic school. He gains a +1 bonus to saving throws vs. necromantic spells. His opponents, on the other hand, suffer a −1 penalty to saving throws vs. any necromantic spell that he casts.

Spell List: The text below shows the number of spells Strahd can memorize each day, and lists all the spells in his spell books. Entries marked with an asterisk are necromantic spells.

Spell Level	Number	Necromantic Bonus
1-5	5	1
6	3	1
7	2	1
8	1	1

1st level: affect normal fires, burning hands, dancing lights, magic missile, shocking grasp, read magic, comprehend languages, hold portal, protection from good, unseen servant

2nd level: alter self, ESP, fog cloud, invisibility, knock, stinking cloud, vocalize, locate objects, spectral hand*, darkness 15' radius, fog cloud, knock

3rd level: explosive runes, dispel magic, feign death*, fireball, gust of wind, hold person, lightning bolt, tongues, vampiric touch*, nondetection

4th level: contagion*, detect scrying, dimension door, polymorph other, polymorph self, enervation*, ice storm, solid fog, wall of ice, wizard eye

5th level: animate dead*, avoidance, pass

wall, sending, summon shadow*, stone shape, telekinesis, teleport, magic jar*, wall of stone

6th level: control weather, death spell*, anti-magic shell, invisible stalker, guards and wards, stone to flesh, contingency

7th level: finger of death*, limited wish, spell turning, forcecage, delayed blast fireball

8th level: symbol, clone*, maze

Strahd keeps a *contingency* spell active at all times. It states that when he is exposed to paralyzing or destructive light, he is instantly teleported to a secret coffin hidden in a cave in the mountains. There he can heal, until he is ready to seek vengeance.

Magical items are rare in Ravenloft, but Strahd has a small collection. His most prized item is a crystal ball. With it he monitors the goings-on in his domain, as well as many events beyond his borders. The bloodstone pendant Strahd wears is an *amulet of proof against detection and location*. He also wears a *cloak of protection +2*. On his left hand is a *ring of fire resistance*. Stored away in his armory he has a *sword +1*, which is +2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures.

Weathermay, George

7th Level Ranger, Neutral Good

Armor Class	8 (5 w/armor)	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	—	Con	14
Hit Points	40	Int	13
THAC0	14 (13 w/ missiles)	Wis	18
		Cha	8
No. of Attacks	3/2		
Damage/Attack	4-11 (1d8+3) sword 2-7 (1d6+1) hand axe		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	+4 save vs. mental attack		
Magic Resistance	nil		

George is a serious young man of 26 years. He stands 6'1" tall with a lean build. He is usually brooding over some problem, and has a far-away expression. He dresses carelessly, mismatching his clothes and ignoring any sense of color. He is a "hunter of evil." When dressed for action, he wears studded leather armor and carries a sword and hand axe.

Background: George is a member of the Weathermay family, which owns most of the land in Mordent. His family name was tainted by an old legend that linked them to a "creature" who had cursed the land. George wanted to be a righter of wrongs.

As a boy, he devoted himself to the sport of hunting and the manly art of war. His father found this disturbing, because George clearly disliked these activities but studied them anyway. While hunting, George found that he had a special rapport with animals, particularly horses and hounds. At 17, he set off to make the world a better place.

Current Sketch: George's experience in fighting the supernatural has made him wise beyond his years. He still visits his ancestral home, but spends most of his time traveling. He is an intense person whose determination never wavers. His whole being is consumed with his work. In public and with other people, he feels awkward and becomes socially inept. He frequently says the wrong thing at the wrong time, though he rarely lies. Against the supernatural he is cagey and confident. When forced to engage in polite conversation, particularly with women, he stutters or says little at all. He is more comfortable with his animals than with other people.

Combat: George has all of the normal abilities of a 7th level ranger. He carries a *long sword +2* and a hand axe balanced for throwing. In combat he wields both without penalty (standard ranger ability). He can choose whether to use the axe for an attack or to increase his armor class by one. He must make this decision before any combat rolls in the round at hand. If he throws the axe, that is his only action for the round.

George owns a medium warhorse named Perseus. The horse has a morale of 12 and is trained to throw any rider except George. Its saddle has three secret compartments, containing a silver dagger, a holy symbol, and a vial of holy water. George usually hides additional weapons and useful items on his person.

Chapter XIV: BLOODLINES

The pages that follow are all that remain of a small, charred book of genealogies. The book was recovered from the ruins of a tiny chapel high in the Balinok Mountains. It is rumored that a young gypsy woman carried the tome into the chapel, and lit a candle beside its open pages. As she hastened down the mountain path, flames engulfed the sanctuary.

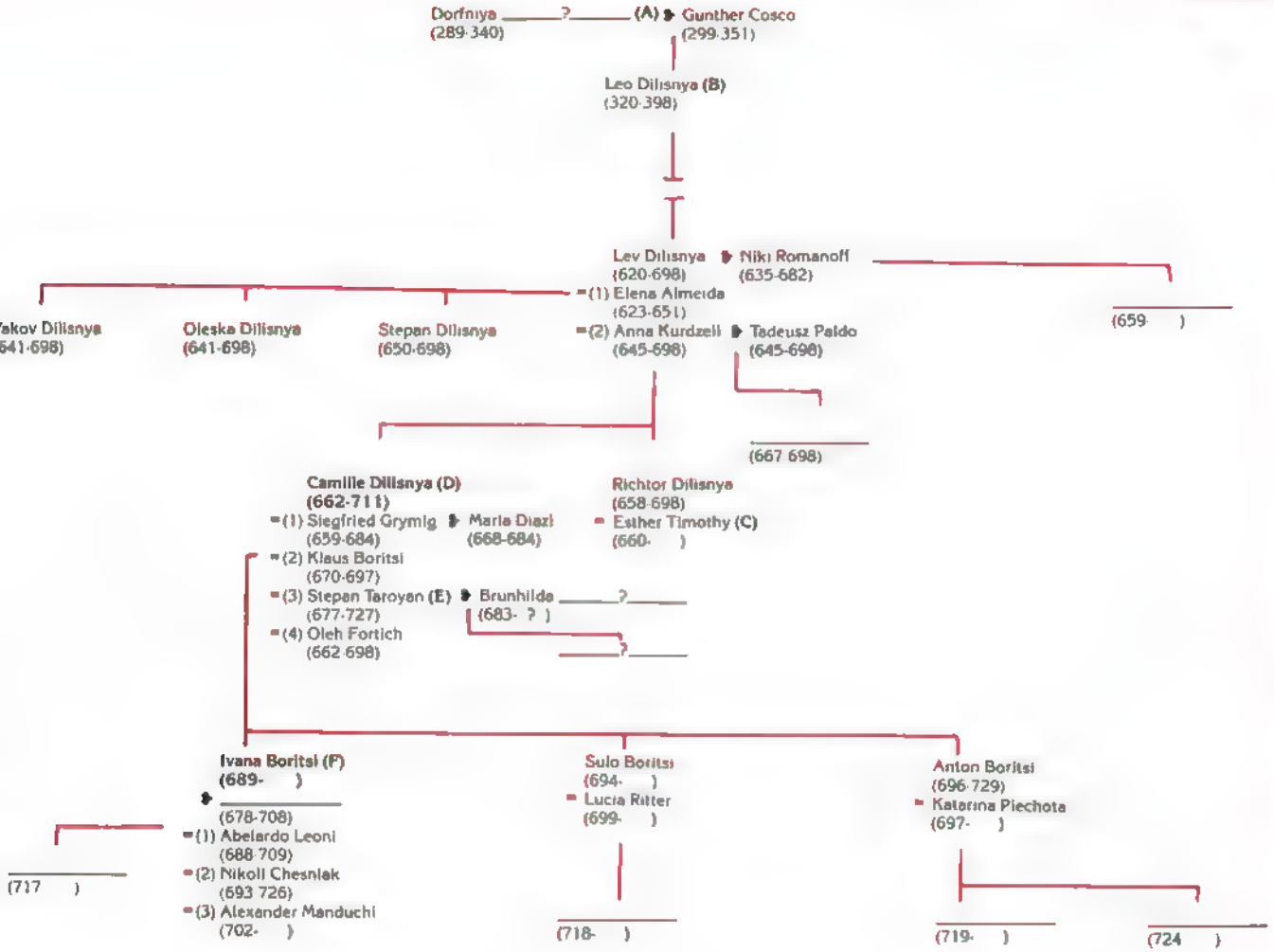
Von Zarovich, Boritsi, Drakov, Dilisnya—these names and more lie upon the eight remaining family trees. Their branches include some of the most prominent lords in Ravenloft. Look closely, and these pages will reveal stories of love and hate, birth and death, and murders and mystery. The trees echo the names of people about whom the lords may speak, and expose the secrets of departed relatives who haunt the dreams of the living.

The trees make useful tools for you, the DM, when you're designing Ravenloft adventures. They can help you develop a villain's background. They also can provide relatives the adventurers may meet. When you pluck an NPC from a family tree, he or she comes with a ready-made background and relationships to the Ravenloft world. Some of these minor characters are black sheep, but many are good, and only a few are as evil or dangerous as the "star" of the family. The trees also offer a means for deception. For example, adventurers who encounter "Mistress Likarevie" may not associate her with Vlad Drakov, though they clearly are related.

As you study the trees, you'll notice a few mysteries. Some branches indicate a descendent, but the name and dates are missing. Either these details were not available to the genealogist, or she chose not to reveal them. At any rate, as DM you are free to fill in the blanks. These "mystery characters" may have direct contact with the major villain, but they rarely play a major role in his or her story.

Stranger still are the questionable dates of death. An open space after a birth date usually means the person still lives. However, a question mark for the date of death indicates the person is presumed deceased, but the date is unknown. In many cases, the character vanished. Or perhaps it is the death, and not the date, that is in question. Many who should have crumbled into dust long ago cannot rest peacefully in Ravenloft.

Boritsi



NOTES

A. Wife of Pidiwik Dilisnya. See Dilisnya tree.

B. Raised as the son of Pidiwik Dilisnya. When Pidiwik died, Leo learned of his true blood and left the Dilisnya family.

C. See Timothy tree. Esther is a werewolf.

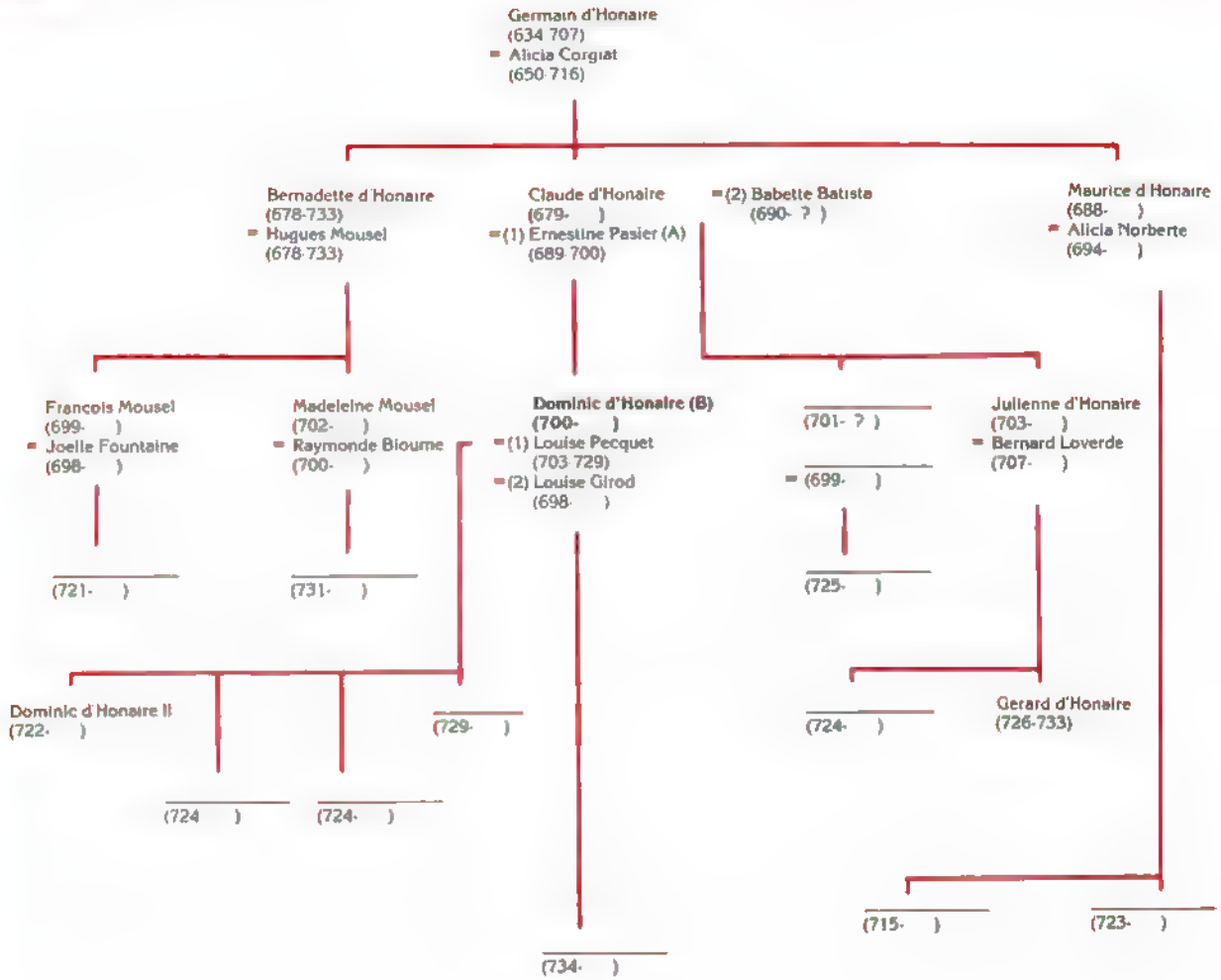
D. Camille was the first lord of Borca. She poisoned her husband and his mistress in 684; another killing spree in 698 severely pruned the rest of the tree.

E. After 1 year of marriage to Camille, Stepan escaped from Borca with his mistress, Brunhilda.

F. Assumed the lordship of Borca after poisoning her mother, Camille, in 711.

) indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.

d'Honaire



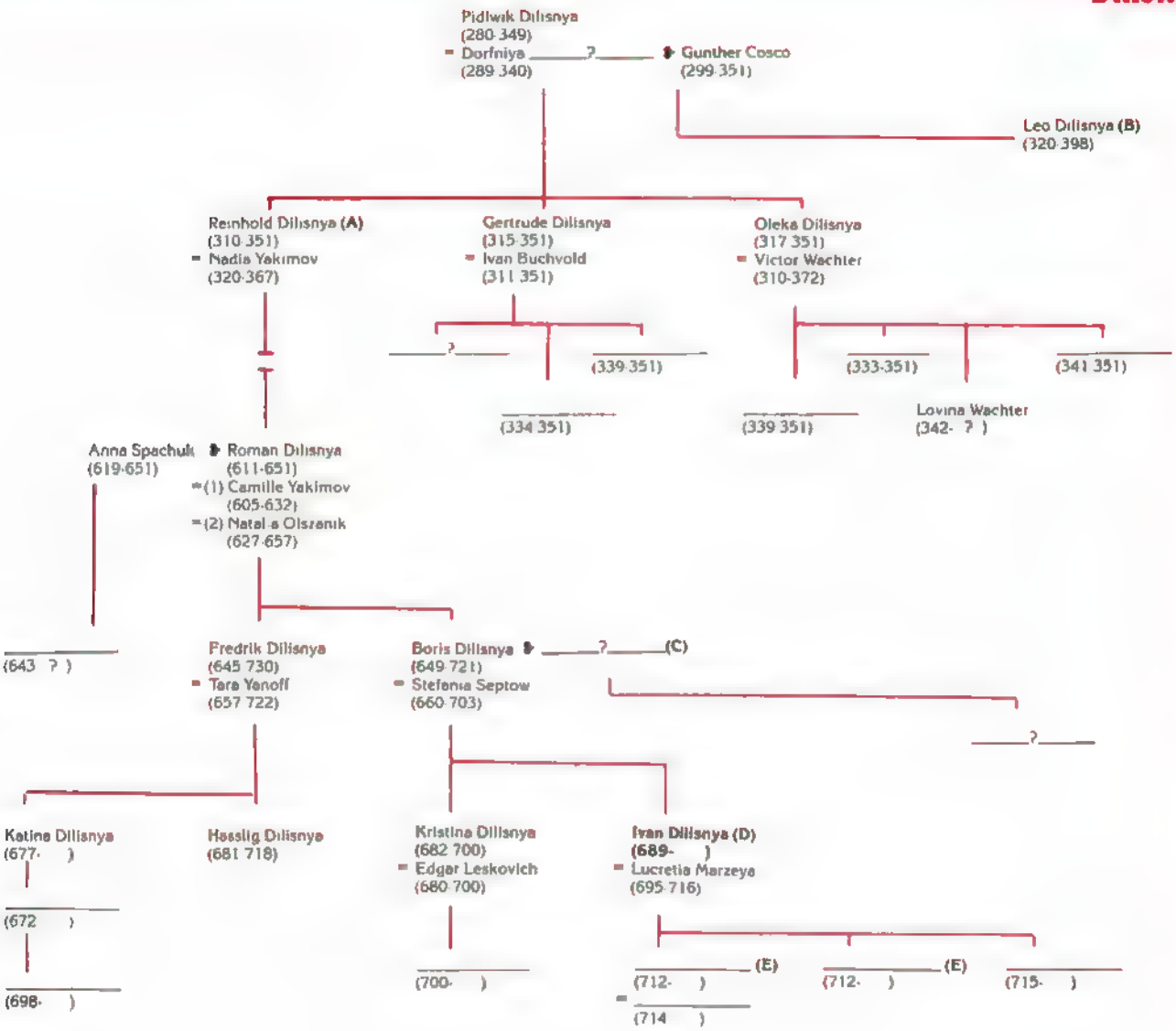
NOTES

A. Died in childbirth. The infant, Dominic, survived.

B. Became Lord of Dementlieu in 707.

indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.

Dilisnya



NOTES

A. All deaths in 351 occurred at Castle Ravenloft, the day of Tatyana's wedding.

B. Dorfniya raised the illegitimate child of Gunther Cosco as Pidlwik Dilisnya's son. Pidlwik never knew. See Boritsi tree.

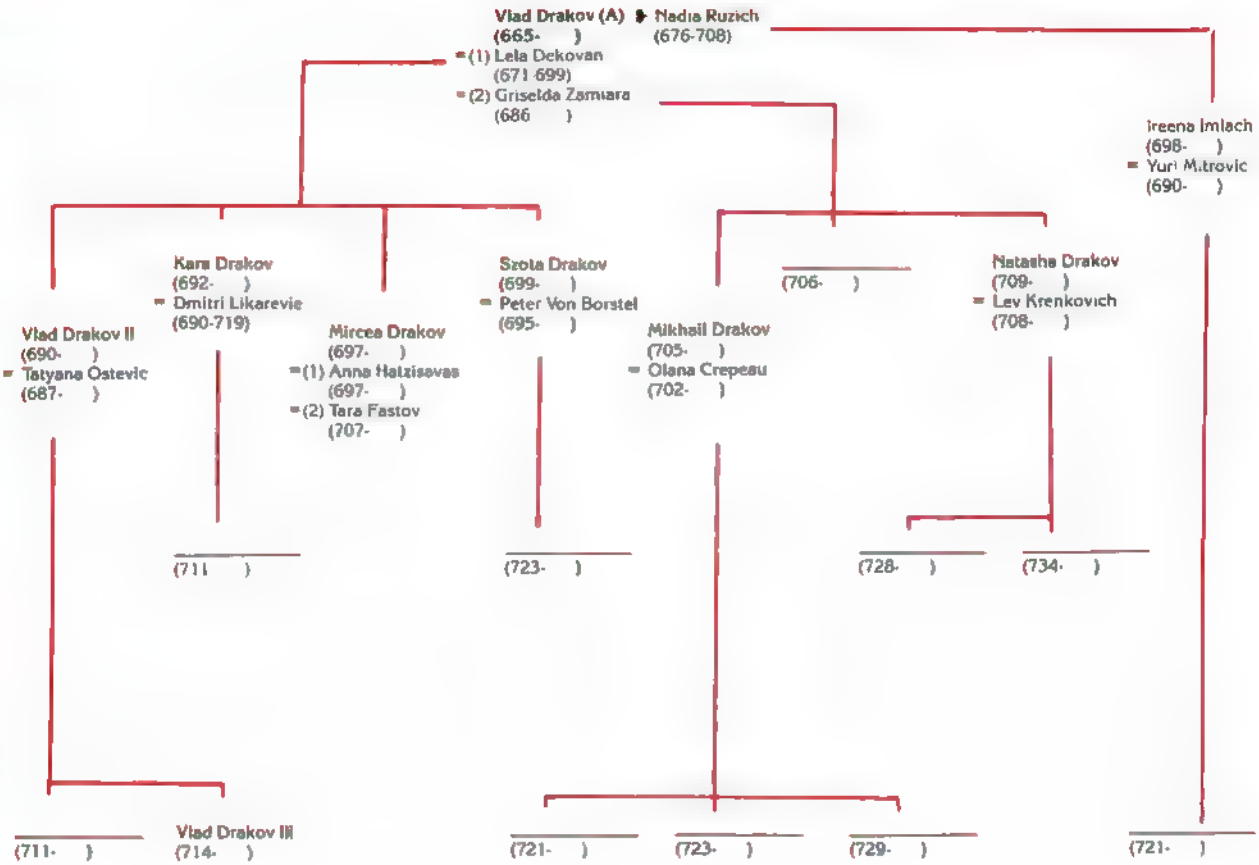
C. Boris D. allegedly fathered the child of at least one peasant girl.

D. Ivan Dilisnya became Lord of Dorvinia in 715.

E. Twins.

➧ indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.

Drakov

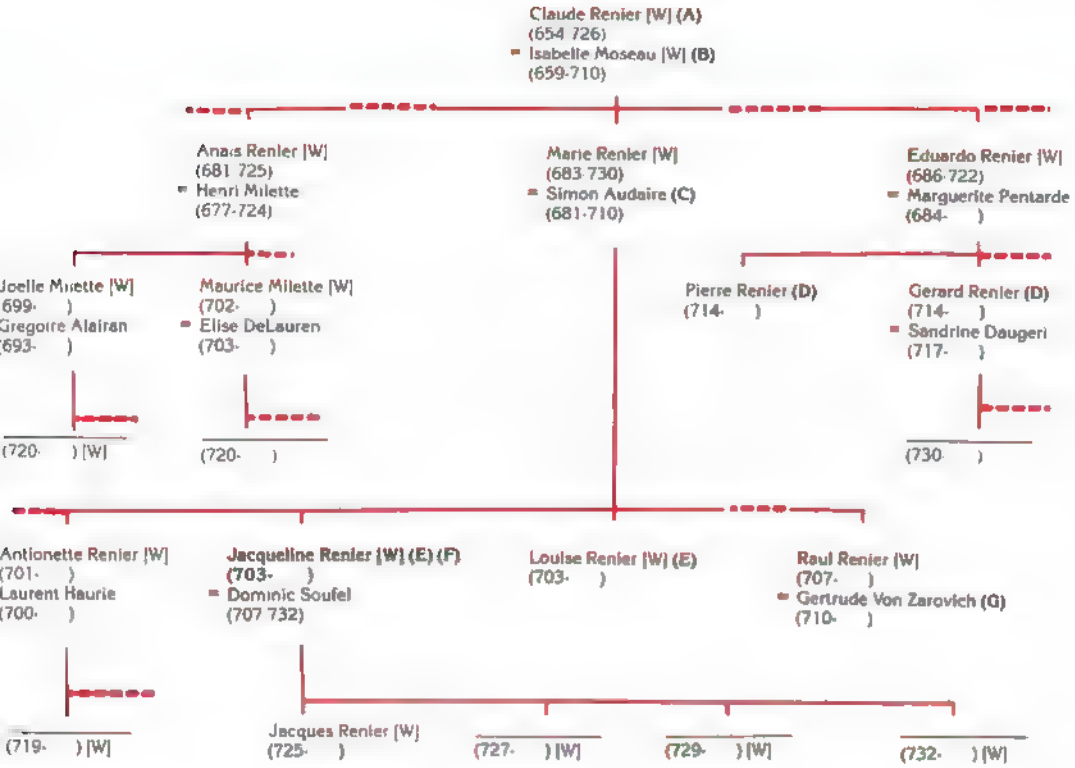


NOTES

A. Became Lord of Falkovnia in 690.

Indicates an illicit affair. = Indicates legal matrimony.

Renier



NOTES

A. Lord of Richemulot 694-726.

B. All female descendents of Isabelle Museau take Isabelle as their middle name and bear many children (twins are common).

C. Killed her husband Simon; gave her children her maiden name (Renier).

D., E. Twins.

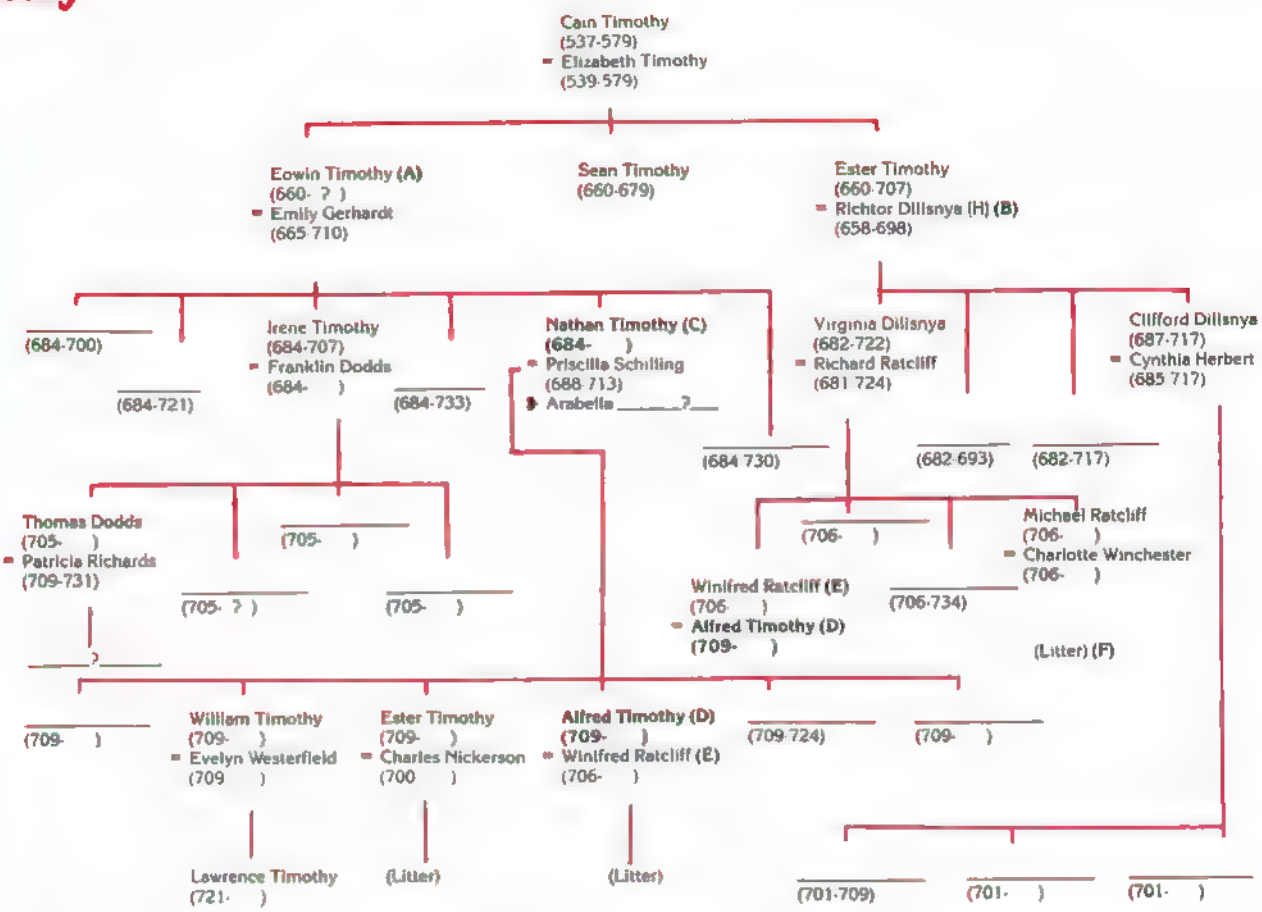
F. Became Lord of Richemulot in 726. Values family traditions; murdered her husband Dominic and gave her children the Renier name.

G. See Von Zarovich family tree.

[W] = Wererats.

→ indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.

Timothy



NOTES

A. A werewolf in Mordent.

B. See Boritsi tree.

C. Lord of Arkandale.

D. Lord of Verbrek.

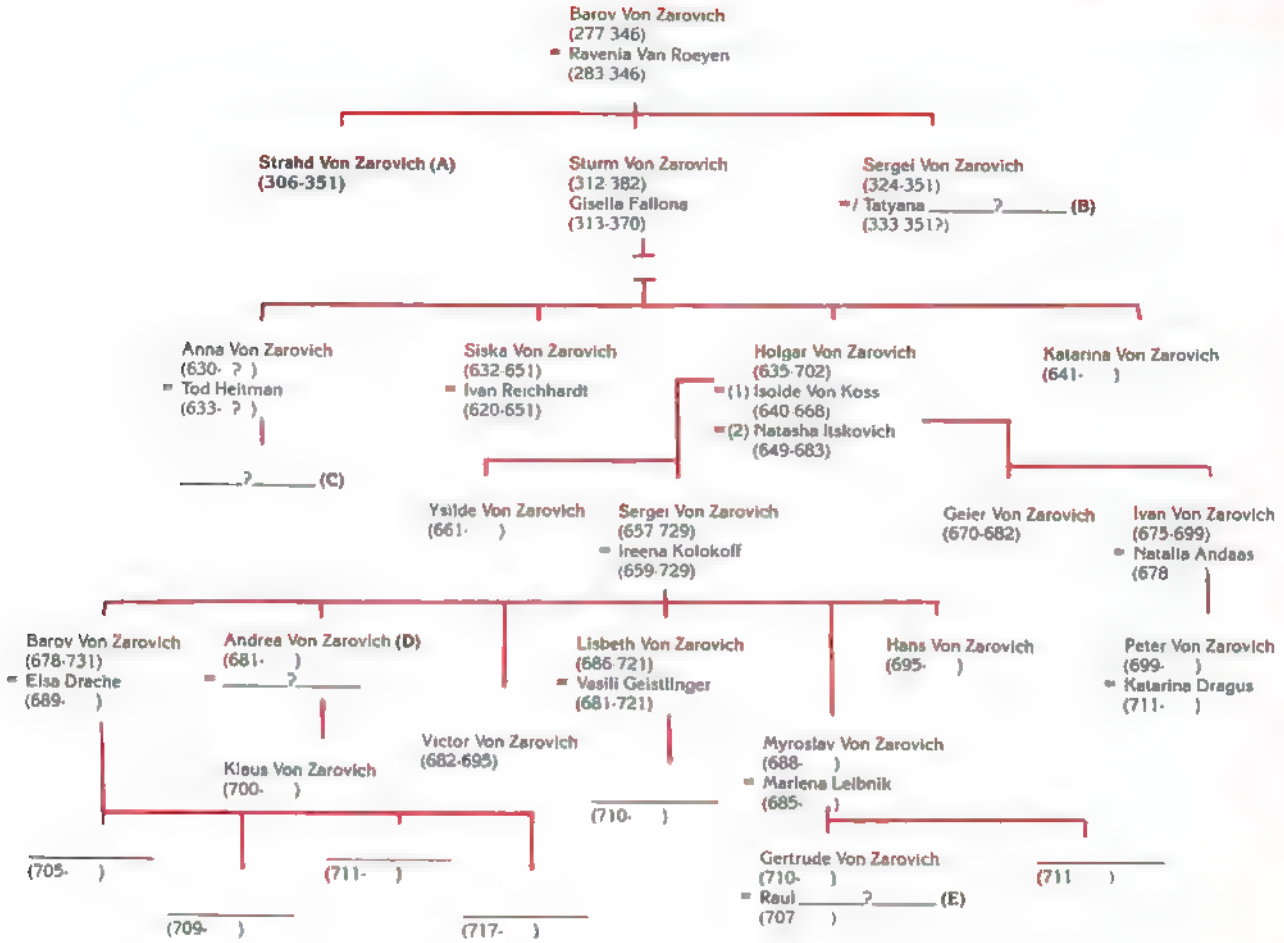
E. Alfred, Lord of Verbrek, married his distant cousin, Winifred Ratcliff.

F. The offspring in this litter are not shown on the family tree.

[H] = Human, not a werewolf

❥ indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.

Von Zarovich



NOTES

A. Became the undead Lord of Barovia in 351.

B. The object of Strahd's passion; presumed dead in 351, the day of her wedding to Sergei.

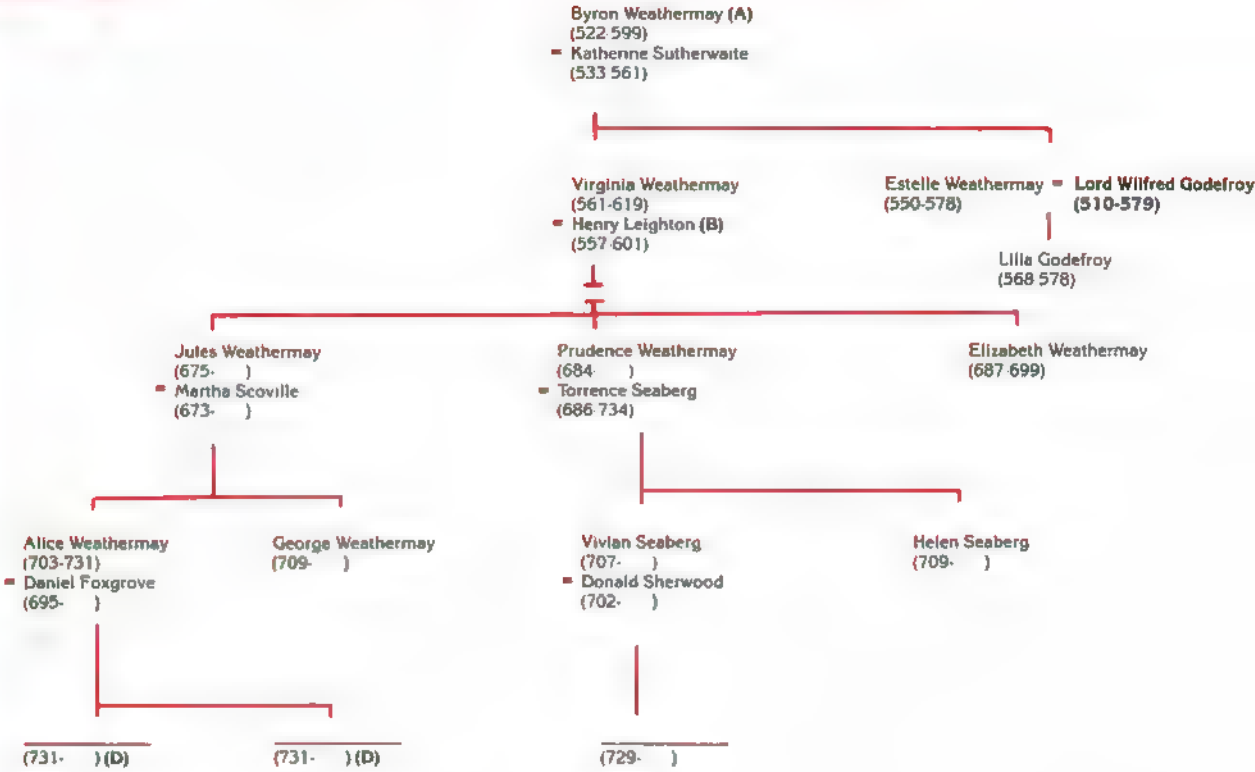
C. The whereabouts and status of Anna and Tod's offspring are unknown. The couple vanished when Anna was with child.

D. Andrea left Barovia in 698; returned with infant son Klaus in 700. Father of child unknown; Andrea refuses to tell.

E. Gertrude's lover Raul is rumored to be a Renier. (See Renier tree.) Raul Renier is a wererat.

❥ Indicates an illicit affair. = Indicates legal matrimony.

Weathermay



NOTES

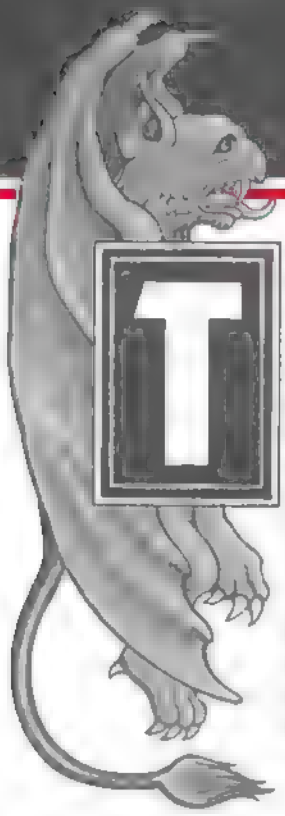
A. Lifelong resident of Mordent. Age 57 when Mordent entered Ravenloft.

B. In exchange for marriage into wealth, Henry agreed to take the Weathermay name in accordance with his father-in-law's wish. All children of Virginia Weathermay continued her family name.

C. Lord Godefroy murdered his wife and daughter in 578. Their spirits haunted him, and he committed suicide one year later. He became the ghost-lord of Mordent in 579.

D. Twins.

◗ indicates an illicit affair. = indicates legal matrimony.



Chapter XV: TECHNIQUES OF TERROR

The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and inexplicable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint . . . of that most terrible conception of the human brain—a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the demons of unplumbed space.

—H.P. Lovecraft
"Supernatural Horror
in Literature"

Easy to say. Not so easy to accomplish. Though fear, Lovecraft adds, is "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind," evoking it can be difficult. It doesn't take much to create a single moment of acute revulsion. But true horror, that painful emotion which starts with apprehension and leads to palpitation and perhaps even sweat—that's tough to engineer.

This section explains some of the tools storytellers use to create fear. At the end of the chapter you'll find additional tips for creating fear in a role-playing adventure.

Believable Horrors

Nothing in horror literature is real; it is merely imagined. But if the reader doesn't believe in that awful, shadowy world, at least for a moment, then the mood and the fear is lost. And if the player in an adventure doesn't at some point fear for the very soul of his character, then the adventure is not really "horror."

Effective horror coaxes the audience into gradually dropping their defenses, into suspending their disbelief until they truly believe that the impossible may actually be *possible.* How do you do it? How do you convince an audience that the shadows in their nightmares offer a glimpse of something horrible and real? With careful details, fully developed characters, and a familiar background that's somewhat warped.

Details, Details: Details are important to any good story, but they're essential to effective horror. Color, mass, texture, taste, temperature, odor, sound, sensation—all add meat to a tale, all bring the "unreal" world to life. The audience won't believe in that world until they see it, hear it, *feel* it. The detail needn't be gruesome. Often, it focuses on the ordinary: the faint, chilling breeze channeled through a keyhole as the character peers through it, the smell of sulphur in a lab, the sharp crack of a whip and the froth round a horse's mouth. Sometimes, just creating a good name for an imaginary item or place helps make it real. (Lovecraft himself used this to good effect; his tomes become so familiar you'd almost expect to find them in the library.)

Well Developed Characters: No character will seem believable without a background and personality to drive him—especially a villain. Even "inhuman" characters have unique motivations that shape their behavior. They have a history, opinions, mannerisms, habits, strengths, weaknesses, and obsessions. Such things should consistently guide the character's actions, like a code of conduct. Even if a story doesn't detail a character's history, or immediately spell out his strengths and weaknesses (and it probably won't), the audience will know when this underlying structure is missing. Without it, characters fall flat. Villains need a little "flesh" to be fearsome.

Strange Yet Familiar: A detailed background and well developed characters help make any story believable. But a third technique, "warping the familiar," is unique to tales of terror. Gothics make the supernatural convincing by closely interweaving it with ordinary, familiar things—things we recognize and in which we believe. The traveler who seeks shelter for the night in a woodsman's cabin—and enters to find a ticking clock, a whistling kettle, and a warm, glowing fire—will let familiar comforts draw him in. When the woodsman never appears, and some nameless terror rises from the ashes of the fire, we're more likely to accept it. Like the fiend who dons a veneer of gracious manners to gain an invitation to his victim's home, familiarity is the vehicle that opens a door to our subconscious, and lets the horrors waiting there come in.

Lovecraft excels at this technique. His New England landscapes are frightening because they're warped; they're believable because they're familiar: ". . . the briar-bordered stone walls press closer and closer against the ruts of the dusty, curving road. The trees . . . seem too large, and the wild weeds . . . obtain a luxuriance not often found in settled regions." A dusty road, a stone wall, a few weeds—nothing alien there. It's a strange yet ordinary world that lies somewhere beyond the roads we've already explored. A traveler might easily stumble across it, if he had the misfortune of taking the wrong turn . . .

Isolation

If there were anyone to talk to I could bear it, but there is no one . . .

—J. Harker, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Children know the fear of being alone in the dark, or rather, the fear of not being *completely* alone. They dread feeling abandoned, small, facing the beast whose breath clouds the glass in the window. They stare, wide-eyed and quivering, at the phantom who takes shape in the shadows, the fiend who waits patiently for sleepy little eyelids to drop, along with defenses. Because then—the child believes—tender, young flesh can be consumed. And no one is there to stop it. No one is there to help . . .

It's no coincidence that Gothics (and other horror tales) are set in isolation. We never lose the fear of being alone, in the dark, beyond the familiar comforts of civilization—and most importantly, beyond the reach of someone who cares enough to shield us from harm. By day, a grown man may feel only frustration when a stalled motor leaves him stranded on a lonely country road. But it's a rare soul who can walk that same unfamiliar road in the dead of night, and not feel his childhood fears rekindled, his imagination feeding on every hint of terror.

Isolation is not always physical; it can be social, too. A chasm separates the disinherited from their loved ones. An outcast walks alone even in a bustling city. Foreigners are isolated in strange lands, where language and custom create a circle they cannot enter. It is frightening to be cut off from human comfort when it is only inches beyond your grasp. It can be doubly frightening to extend your hand to a friend in the dark, and feel cold, steely fingers urgently clutching your own.

So settings can isolate a character. Societies can, too. In perhaps the worst twist of all, both of them conspire against the victim. The victim finds himself in a desolate place where even the company he keeps is deadly. Imagine this scene: Three boys—Jack, John, and Blake, set out for adventure on a sunny morning. The trio hikes for miles into the hills, unfettered by worry or care. At the summit, the boys create a special bond, pricking their fingers "like Indians" and rubbing them together to form a brotherhood of blood. Blake, too squeamish, only pretends to pierce his own skin. In heading homeward, they take the wrong path and lose their way. Storm clouds blacken the sky. The boys take refuge in an abandoned shack, consoled by each other's company. As the storm rises, so does a strange throbbing within the shelter. The wood groans, twists, and splinters, and a mouth begins to form in the wall. Jack and John's hands begin to throb in time with the shack's own deafening beat. A tiny rivulet of blood flows from their fingertips. Only Blake is exempt. The others shrink away from him. Consumed with fear, Jack and John agree to try tossing Blake into the gaping mouth. A single boy is left to fend off the terror—and the dear friends on whom he once depended—alone.

When the misty fingers of Ravenloft reach out and draw the unsuspecting in, these new "guests" are already isolated. The language is foreign, the people weird (or worse), the settings desolate. Gone is the relative security of other worlds. There are no sure-fire saving throws here, no white knights riding to the rescue. As an adventure develops, the characters may find themselves separated from their party one by one. Because as every fiend knows, sudden isolation, especially in a dark, shadowy world where nothing is certain, can tear a wound even in the toughest, most heroic skin, leaving it open to evil's infection.

A Villain in Control

Goodness, purity, and the "hero" or "heroine" never have complete control in a tale of horror, because lack of control makes them vulnerable. The hero, emboldened by past conquests (like many player characters) may

believe he's his own master. In truth, he's more like a marionette. And someone—or something—that lurks in the shadows is always pulling the strings.

The hero's control of his situation slips away subtly at first, so subtly he may fail to notice. Later, as the villain flaunts his powers, the victim's lack of control becomes obvious. Every villain has his own techniques for toying with his victim's fate. Some use curses. Others preserve the illusion that the victim is gaining an advantage, then delight in shattering that illusion just when the victim is most content. But no matter who, or what, wrests control from the character, the result is the same: the character's actions rarely lead to an outcome he expects, and they never have the results he hopes for.

The Strange or Unfortunate Circumstance

Most victims do not seem blessed with luck—if they were, they would not be victims. Circumstances "beyond their control" tend to undermine their complacency and eventually maneuver them toward danger. Trains run late. A broken watch causes a rendezvous to be missed. A gust of wind extinguishes a candle. This is the odd coincidence fools ignore, or the setback heroes bravely dismiss by saying, "It's nothing we can't handle."

But as one setback follows another, even the fool is uneasy. A sudden downpour reduces a blazing fire to smoke and sizzling ash. The driver of your coach suddenly convulses and dies, and he alone knew the route to your destination. At last the bold hero is afraid, too. He anxiously awaits each new twist of fate, because he knows it will be truly twisted.

Entrapment

Be it a mouse or a man, every animal fears a trap. It's a matter of survival: the living cannot thrive in shackles. So whenever freedom fades, tension and fear are sure to rise.

Most traps involve physical confinement. A character is closed in a coffin and buried alive. The walls in an exitless room begin to move, threatening to suffocate their quarry if they do not crush him first. A damsel hides in a closet while the villain calmly stands outside, listening

for the sound of her breath and her beating heart. The hunted (and the haunted) never enjoy being caught.

But not every trap is obvious. In Stoker's *Dracula*, Harker doesn't realize he's imprisoned in the castle for days; he thinks he's a guest. Nor is every trap so literal as steel jaws crushing a rabbit's leg. It can be a web of deceit—an evil plot made of tricks and betrayals that strip the hero of his defenses one by one. Or it may be a trap of the victim's own making, created by a series of foolish mistakes. When the victim finds his options dwindling until no action is safe, he too has fallen into a trap. And it may be more deadly than anything made of stone or steel.

Assaults on the Body

Some victims are crippled by fear itself. Cowardice leaves them paralyzed, weak, and defenseless. Heroes tend to have a bit more "backbone." So authors of terror frequently saddle them with a real physical weakness—one that limits their ability to respond to threats. A sprained ankle slows a character who tries to flee (though it doesn't stop him cold). A cut on the hand limits his ability to hold a weapon. (And of course he'll need to hold one, since the subtle scent of his blood will attract carnivores in the wood.) The tougher the victim is in spirit, the harsher the handicap tends to be. Some plucky protagonists are crippled or confined to a wheelchair. Others may be rendered blind, mute, or deaf—often suddenly, by an unfortunate twist of fate. But most physical weaknesses only handicap a character slightly; they don't make him helpless. That's how tension is preserved. After all, what fun is a game of "Cat and Mouse" if the mouse can't run?

The handicaps mentioned above are "natural"; they could befall anyone, without any obvious help from the supernatural. Worse yet are "unnatural" assaults on the body. When a leg sprouts scales and starts to ripple, a sprained muscle seems tame by comparison. A few tiny puncture wounds can be darned unsettling if they appear when the victim is bathing alone. And the woman whose rounded belly shows the gentle kicking of a life inside can scarcely feel at ease if she believes she isn't pregnant. Mutation, mutilation, invasion—the threat alone is enough to scare most people. And virtually all three occur when a character sprouts fur, fangs, and claws and begins to howl uncontrollably at the moon.

Assaults on the Mind

The mind is man's most private world, his most intimate self. Yet frequently the "evil" ventures even there. It's the most horrid kind of invasion, the worst way to lose control. The effect may be subtle at first: the victim suspects that his thoughts are no longer private, or that an idea was "implanted" and not his own. He struggles to deny what he knows to be true: "I must have imagined the voice." "It haunted me in a dream." Soon blackouts, telepathic messages, or strange visions wrest further control from the victim. He starts to question his sanity, and doubt his every perception. When someone (or something) else plans to take possession, losing one's mind is especially horrid.

Subtle, Layered Effects

In Ravenloft the lights don't go off all at once. They go off one, by one, by one, and with every increasing shade of darkness the victim feels his blood growing colder. At least, that's the way it's supposed to feel. Horror is a sensation of dread that slowly builds until you reach an acute, climactic moment of terror. Creating that awful feeling takes time, patience, and layer upon layer of effect.

The key to creating these layers is subtlety. A moment of revulsion is easy to create, but it's not the anxiety and dread effective horror should evoke. Avoid excessive blood and gore. A few red flecks on a stair can be ominous. A river of plasma is downright disgusting. Where blood is concerned, the mere allusion may be enough—a stain of wine on crisp, white linens; the blood red lips of a sated vampire; a dull, distant sound that suggests a clubbing, though the listener is never quite sure.

Horrors that take shape in someone's mind can be far more fearful than gross descriptions that leave nothing to the imagination. Especially in gothic horror, the author's job is to sow the seeds of terror with suggestion and menace, not with clinical details.

Plots that Tease

A true master of terror teases his audience bit by bit. He doesn't drop a sack of monstrosities on their heads and expect it to constitute a plot. He takes care not to reveal too much too soon, but always provides just enough of a hook to draw the audience (and the victim) further into danger. A ghost appears first as a fleeting vision, as a curtain stirring, or an unexplained knock at your bedroom door. A threat is vague, shadowy, and veiled, and the veil may not be lifted completely until the story reaches its climax.

Uncertainty is the wellspring of fear. Mystery, suspense, dread—they all stem from things you *don't* know, not what you fully understand. The victim in a horror story never knows quite what to expect, but he always expects *something*. Nearly always, that is. Just when the tension has mounted until it is almost unbearable—just when the victim can scarcely hold his breath any longer—a clever author breaks that tension just a little. Sometimes humor does the trick. A discordant joke forces the victim to relax and let out his breath. Or a red herring leads the victim to a dead end, where he foolishly drops his guard. Other times, a "false alarm" helps break the tension. The victim wanders through the labyrinth, searching for an exit, knowing that behind any corner, terror may await. A black cat leaps out—the false alarm. But the next time, or the next, the danger will be real. And because the victim has just exhaled, he may not even have the breath to scream.

Fear in an RPG

Half the fun of reading or watching a tale of horror is being afraid for the main character—gripping your seat, heart pounding, screeching "No! Don't do that, you fool!" as the character chooses a path to certain doom. You're along for the ride, careening recklessly down the track of terror which the author has engineered.

The author who writes such a story is fully in control of the character's actions. He can make the victim ignore warnings and deny what the reader knows to be true. But when you design or run a role-playing adventure, there's a new twist: you don't control the victim's actions, the player does.

Creating fear in a role-playing adventure presents challenges other authors don't face. But it also offers some advantages. Both stem from that critical difference: you've got a player to scare as well as a character. And the player (unlike the character in a novel) won't sit back passively and swallow every terror you toss out. The tips below will help you put some fear in the hearts of RAVENLOFT™ adventurers—players and characters alike.

■ No matter which technique you're using, keep two things in mind:

1) Use it sparingly. At best, anything that becomes too familiar is no longer frightening. At worst, you risk of angering or frustrating the players. *Thou shalt not commit overkill.*

2) Save the best for last. The rule above doesn't mean you can never bring out the big guns—just exercise a little restraint. Choose the time carefully. Launch particularly nasty techniques (deadly assaults on the body, for example) when the players are over-confident, or when the characters have become more than mere pests to the villain.

■ *Fear versus frustration.* Virtually every "technique of terror" in this chapter weakens or limits characters in some way. If you use too heavy a hand, the players will begin to see *you* as their nemesis, not the villain. Here's how to avoid it:

• Strive to control the results of a character's actions, not the action itself. Even while playing a RAVENLOFT adventure, a good DM rarely says, "You can't do that." Instead he says, "Okay, you can try that. Now here's what happens . . ." Players should never feel that you're running their characters for them.

• Never punish the PCs arbitrarily. Every mishap, every affliction, should have a logical cause that fits the story and the villain's motives. A careful DM won't incapacitate (or even handicap) a PC just for the sake of the scare. Ideally, victims will sense that their own choices have caused their suffering—that their own greed, pride, or genuine foolishness has made them vulnerable. ("If I hadn't touched it, my hand would not be paralyzed.") That's more frightening for the victim, less frustrating for the player, and more satisfying for the villain. Villains enjoy nothing more than seducing their victim into sealing his own fate.

• Let "natural" troubles plague the PCs

whenever possible. An isolated setting, a terrible storm, dense fog—all these hinder a character. Because they occur naturally, they seem less contrived. The players are more likely to accept them—even relish them—as part of a good, plausible horror story. Take advantage of Mother Nature's timeless arsenal: wind, rain, snow, hail, lightning, dust storms, floods, raging rivers, volcanic eruptions, natural fires, and more.

• Grant players minor successes. When characters never succeed, their players become frustrated and bored. Although "success" in Ravenloft will never mean "hack the biggest and baddest monster till he dies," you can still provide minor rewards to keep the players interested. Let the players win a few minor battles against the villain's minions to offset frustration. Let them appear to land a few blows against the villain himself. Usually, that's right in character for the villain. At times, villains in Ravenloft may even lend characters a hand just to help them build a false sense of security.

■ *Hit 'em Where it Hurts.* Player characters have powers and advantages their unfortunate counterparts in literature do not. Wizards and priests cast spells, for example. Fighters and thieves can wield enchanted weapons. Some nonhuman races have special abilities such as infravision. To put fear in the hearts of such extraordinary victims, you may have to "get personal." When player characters are over-confident you must strive to erode the source of that confidence.

Some devices that mildly torture cocky characters are built into Ravenloft from the start. For example, all priests suffer a −1 penalty when attempting to turn undead. The penalty rises in the presence of the lord who commands those undead creatures. (See "PCs in Ravenloft.") Curses are one of the most powerful and personal punishments a PC can suffer. Other assaults are up to you—and more importantly, the villain.

Villains are often well aware of each character's Achilles' heel. If necessary, they will exploit it. The more personal and dangerous a given PC's transgressions against the villain are, the more personal and severe the villain's response tends to be. (Use restraint here, but don't be afraid to let the "punishment fit the crime.") A powerful and annoying PC mage will be less of a problem if he stutters or if his hand is palsied. A cleric will have a tough time turning undead if he's bound and gagged. Beware of crippling a fighter completely, however; unfortunately the player will have little to do if his character can no longer fight. Instead, direct your assaults toward his favorite weapon. For example, when Dirk the Paladin tries to plunge his sword into the "Count's" favorite vampiress, the Count melts the sword. (Who says chivalry is dead?)

■ *Play villains as full-bodied characters,* not attack-happy monsters. Running a Ravenloft personality is not like running an ordinary monster—it's like playing an important NPC. You should know and understand that villain completely—not only his tremendous powers, but also his wants and weaknesses. Remember, a well developed background makes villains believable. It also helps makes them frightening, instead of merely frustrating.

Ravenloft villains are tough—far tougher than any PC. Muscle to muscle, spell to spell, the player characters are almost always outclassed. Fortunately, most Ravenloft villains have one fatal flaw: ego. Most underestimate the prowess of their opponents, and take risks to amuse themselves. They could squash the PCs in a moment, but they won't. They want, even need, to see their victims tremble. And dead men do not tremble. So the villains toy with and tease their victims, because it's their favorite (and perhaps only) entertainment.

Most assaults are more creative than crippling, reflecting the villain's dark sense of humor. A curse that makes a thief laugh uncontrollably won't render him helpless. But it will make it difficult to slink past "Igor the Henchman" unnoticed. That's how you maintain the tension required to create fear. The characters should always feel threatened; they should sense that their destruction is not only possible, but likely if they don't "play smart." But they should never feel that no matter what their actions are, they have no hope of survival.

■ *Isolate players.* Player characters suffer isolation just like any other character. You can trap them alone in a castle. Let a howling beast hunt them down on the lonely moor. Fill a village with people who refuse to help them. But when you isolate player characters from *each other,* role-playing offers a new twist: you can separate the players, too.

Players should not see and hear critical details their characters would not. If a wall suddenly turns and divides the party in two, try running each group in a separate room for a while. If a character suddenly finds himself sliding down a chute into a dungeon, then ask that player to leave the room. Isolating players helps add atmosphere to your game. Just don't do it too often, or for too long. Save the technique for critical encounters. After all, your players came to role-play an adventure in Ravenloft, not a visit to their doctor's waiting room.

Here's one example of a good opportunity to isolate players. Boris and Ludwig, two intrepid fools, are filing down a dark, narrow hall. Without warning, an invisible portal closes, splitting the passage. Boris and Ludwig are separated. You separate their players, too. Neither character can see the other, but they can still hear each other—or so it seems. Boris hears Ludwig calling for help. (That's what you tell Boris's player. Then you ask him to declare his character's action, and rush back to Ludwig's player.) Ludwig, meanwhile, hears his own voice too, but *he's* not talking. A phantom is mimicking his voice. And the instructions that phantom is giving will surely put Ludwig in peril. Desperately Ludwig tries to make himself heard. Even if he succeeds, who will Boris believe? The phantom voice? Or his own?

■ *Pass Notes.* It's not always necessary to take a player aside to give him "privileged" information. Sometimes it's more effective to pass him a note. For example, a character is experiencing changes that mimic the transformation into a werewolf. (Maybe he's changing, maybe he's not. The villain could be toying with him.) During play, you nonchalantly pass him a note that states, "Your palms begin to itch" or "Your fingers are growing at an unnatural rate." *Then you take back the note so other players won't see it.* Of course, the other players will want to know what the note says, and will become suspicious of their companion if he answers, "nothing" or makes up a silly response. (For effect, you might pass blank notes to one or more players from time to time to keep everyone guessing.)

Done well, note-passing facilitates a tried and true maneuver: divide and conquer. When characters mistrust one another, they begin to lose sight of the real threat—the villain himself. That makes characters more vulnerable. And it makes the villain quite content.

■ *Add atmosphere to your game room.* It's hard to create a spooky mood in broad daylight. It's also tough to scare a player when the person next to him is crunching a pretzel or finishing a slurpee. To counter such distractions, add a little atmosphere to your game room. That doesn't mean you should wear a shroud, dribble fake blood from your mouth, or play in the attic among the cobwebs. But go ahead and dim the lights a little. Play spooky background music, if you've got it. Use simple sound effects. (If a ghost raps on the door, rap on the table.) Do the same things a good storyteller would do if he had an eager audience gathered round a fire to hear ghost stories. Just keep it simple, and remember it's all in fun.

■ *Undermine player confidence* with an occasional "mysterious new game procedure." Ideally, your players will know nothing about the rules in this book and little to nothing about the adventure you're running. That doesn't happen too often. After a few games, a few peeks at the rules, they begin to think they know what you, the DM, have up your sleeve at any given time. So fake an occasional "surprise" rule that makes players question what's happening behind the scenes. For example:

- As characters stroll through the woods, roll dice for no apparent reason and write a note to yourself. Players will wonder what horrors you're concealing from them.
- Take away their character sheets. Then hand them a slip of paper with their hit points. Before you return the character sheets, you might write a note to one or two players about what they have experienced. Or you might change their hit points so they're lower than the hit points they've been tracking. (Whatever attacked them inflicts deceptively little damage.) Or you may do nothing at all with the sheets, but leave the players wondering . . .
- Take the dice from the players and roll them yourself at some point during an encounter.

Be creative. Be dramatic. But don't go overboard. These maneuvers should be that rare little "extra" that supports another technique of terror. If you overuse any gimmick, it becomes ineffective.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Many AD&D® adventures go something like this: the PCs wander from room to room (or over hill and over dale), slaying creatures and seizing the spoils, until at last they face the biggest creature of all, and destroy it, too. In Ravenloft, you might be tempted to substitute a powerful vampire for the "beast supreme," and fill the string of lesser encounters with "Gothic" monsters such as bats, ghouls, and ghosts. Unfortunately, that formula leaves something to be desired: a story.

Dungeon crawls make the worst kind of RAVENLOFT™ adventure, because they lack a real villain, a real problem, a real plot. In this realm, characters should do more than cast spells and bash monsters — they should unravel *mysteries*, too. Each encounter should be more than an isolated incident with a bounty attached. It should provide information that helps flesh out the story, and clues that help the characters succeed (or survive). If "spoils" are involved, those items usually should be a part of the story—something useful or telling—not just a trophy to add to the haul.

When you're designing a Ravenloft adventure for your players, it's best to start with the villain. Remember, he (or she) is more than a creature. He's an intelligent, full-bodied character, even if he's a ghost. He has strengths and weaknesses that go beyond mere numbers. Most importantly, he's up to something, and he has a good reason for doing it. The PCs must stop him even if they can't destroy him. They may not encounter the villain directly until the story is well underway, but they should always sense that he—or someone—is lurking behind the scenes, pulling the strings.

When the PCs do finally confront the villain directly, the encounter may be unlike any other they've experienced. In a typical AD&D® encounter, either the monster dies, or the PCs do. In a clash with a Ravenloft villain, it's possible that neither will occur. For example, when a fighter raises his sword against a master vampire, and begins his bold, sweeping slash, the vampire may simply grab the sword, then bend it. Would the vampire kill the fighter? Probably not— from his perspective, why bother? (If the story is clever, the PC may be a useful pawn in the vampire's scheme.) But the creature might pause, pick the fighter up, then fling him against the wall like a sack of rotten fruit— just to prove how insignificant the PCs really are. Then the creature would simply turn, and vanish.

How do you come up with a good Ravenloft story? Look to the classics for inspiration. (See the bibliography under "From Gothic Roots.") Modern, moody tales of horror— in both novels and films— also can offer examples. But remember this: Ravenloft adventures should be modelled after the likes of *Dracula*, not "Virgin Vampires with Chain Saws." Hitchcock's movies capture the right spirit; flicks like *Friday the Thirteenth* do not.

As you develop your adventure, review the chapters on Gothic horror and "techniques of terror." They'll help you create the right mood and find ways to terrify the PCs— such as isolation and a taunting, teasing villain. In particular, concentrate on the setting, and the little details that make your story believable and frightening. These things may be "fluff" in other adventures, but they're essential to a good horror story.

Below you'll find several ideas for Ravenloft adventures. They are by no means complete. Instead, they are simply the seeds of terror. Nourish them with a villains' dark desires. Then water them with intrigue and fear. With a little care, your grisly garden will grow— and grow, and grow, and grow . . .

• **Murder by Moonlight.** Our heroes are traveling in Ravenloft when a horse goes lame. A storm moves in. The PCs take shelter in an old mansion, which is owned by a polite but distraught family. Only the women and children are home. They say that wolves have been slaughtering their sheep, and that the men are out on a hunt. Werewolves are the real problem. Unfortunately, the father of the family has already been infected. He disappears during the hunt. The men fear the worst. Meanwhile, Pa (as a manwolf) tries to break into the mansion and kill his family. The party must ensure the family's safety, cure the father, and escape with their lives. Easy enough, but now what's wrong with little Wilhelm? . . .

• **Special Delivery.** The heroes take shelter in a castle. The daughter of the baron is pregnant, and she gives birth during a storm that evening. Unfortunately, the child is neither human nor helpless. Trapped in the house, the PCs

must try to live through the night and deliver the family from darkness.

The creature might be a miniature spirit naga, born with 1 hit die, the usual powers, and spell abilities at 1st level. With each passing hour, it might grow 2' and advance its spell abilities 1 level.

• **A Ghost Story.** Looking for a way to reduce an equipment list? In this story, the heroes have been kidnapped and drugged by a band of thugs and thieves, who have abandoned the party in a haunted castle (per the "owner's" request). The heroes must escape the castle and the domain. Then they have to hunt down their lost equipment. Unfortunately, most of it will have been sold by this time.

• **Old Friend.** A friendly NPC whom the heroes met in an earlier adventure has requested their help in hunting a vampire. The NPC invites the party to his estate, and traps them there. Since they last saw him, he has become a vampire slave. He wants his old friends to "see the dark" just as he has. So does the vampire lord who controls him, and lurks behind the scenes.

• **The Beast.** It has been many years since the Beast roamed the moors. Now he has returned. But what is he and what does he want? You might design an adventure around any of the following: an undead beast, bhaergala, bulette, margoyle, hell hound, invisible stalker, leucrotta, owlbear, rakshasa, tarrasque (very high level party), thessalmonster, umber hulk, wight, winter wolf. Alter the beast's abilities, give it a history and motives, and keep its identity secret for as long as possible.

• **The Double Edge.** A doppleganger is terrorizing a small, isolated town. He has victimized an NPC who is known and trusted by our heroes. The locals accuse the PCs of the murders, and the NPC comes forward as a witness. He claims he saw them devour the bodies in a gruesome ritual. While awaiting their hanging, the PCs must devise a plan to save themselves and destroy the doppleganger.

• **Jack is Back.** Our heroes are hunting a killer in a large, fog-filled city. But is one of *them* really the hunted? The killer murders everyone that a given PC befriends or speaks with about the crimes.

• **The Hand.** The setting is the residence of a wealthy merchant. In the middle of the night, the merchant is strangled to death. The PCs are invited to solve the crime. They become trapped in the manor. Each night, another person is murdered. A disembodied hand (a crawling claw monster, perhaps) is the killer. The heroes must solve the mystery and destroy the hand.

• **Double Danger.** A group of dopplegangers has infiltrated an entire town. One by one, they are replacing the families. The heroes venture into town. Half the people they talk to are really dopplegangers. Normally, dopplegangers cannot reproduce quickly enough to work such a plot. A doppleganger mastermind is behind this plot. She is like a queen bee, laying many eggs and defending herself with a deadly sting.

• **The Phlebotomist.** The folk have discovered bodies drained of blood. Most are farm animals, but a few people have fallen prey to the terror, too. The neck of each victim shows two tiny red puncture wounds. The townsfolk ask the heroes to solve the mystery.

This looks like the work of a vampire, but it isn't. An evil priest has established a temple, and he requires fresh animal blood for his rituals. With enough of it, he can summon an evil lackey from the lower planes. After overpowering his victims, the priest uses a pronged instrument to puncture the neck vein. He is not alone in his work. Many of the townsfolk who asked the PCs for help are in league with the priest. These worshippers have already murdered the people who came too close to the truth, masking their crime by draining the victims of blood.

Experience Points

In a Ravenloft adventure, PCs may not have the opportunity to make "the big kill" to earn XPs. To compensate, we recommend you use the optional rule for experience points in the DMG (2nd Edition). This awards characters for using their brains when "brawn" alone would fail.

Geist

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night (usually)
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Varies
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Varies

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	Fl 12
HIT DICE:	Nil
THAC0:	Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS:	None
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	None
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Sight causes panic
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	Invulnerable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	100% (see below)
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless
XP VALUE:	0

A geist is the undead spirit of a person. It resembles a ghost or haunt, but is relatively harmless. It is a transparent image of the person at the moment of death. Since death can be violent, geists may have broken necks or gaping, fatal wounds. Others, who died more peacefully or perhaps as a result of poison, may show no outward signs of trauma. Geists always appear to be clothed in the garments they wore at the time of death.

These spirits leave no trace of themselves on the real world. They have no odor, and cannot manipulate physical objects. Even the sight and sound of a geist is elusive; like a hallucination, they only are seen and heard in a person's mind. Characters who are protected from mental attacks cannot perceive a geist.

At times a geist may wish to be witnessed by some people in a group but not others. The geist can choose who will sense it and who will not. It can speak, and choose who will hear it. Language is not a barrier; a geist speaks the universal language of the mind.

Combat: A geist cannot engage in combat. (Its most powerful weapon is speech.) An armor class of 10 has been provided above because characters may attempt to strike it. A "hit" passes right through the geist's body. The spirit may pretend to attack a character, but its attacks pass through the victim's body harmlessly.

The sight of a geist is highly alarming. Usually, viewers assume that they are seeing a ghost or haunt. Characters who see a geist must make a successful fear check or flee in panic. If the geist is particularly gruesome, a Ravenloft horror check may be in order.

A geist can give the impression it is *teleporting*. It decides to not be visible, moves to a new spot, and becomes visible again. It can move through any physical object unimpeded. Magical wardings do keep a geist out, however.

Spells or magical items cannot divine information about a geist, such as its alignment, truthfulness, etc. A *true seeing* spell or equivalent magic allows a character to perceive a blurry, white image of the geist even when it chooses to be invisible. *Dismissal, banishment, wish, abjure,* and *holy word* spells (or equivalent magic) will send the geist to its final resting place. Otherwise, it is immune to all magic and all spells.

Habitat/Society: A geist can exist in any climate. It usually haunts the location of its death, and its territory is limited to a single building or small area. In rare cases, a geist may be able to roam farther.

As solitary undead creatures, geists have no society of their own. A geist may be willing to talk to living beings, however. Its personality and alignment at the time of death determine its attitude and reactions. Some geists are helpful, while others spread lies and confusion.

Ecology: A geist is created when a person dies traumatically. Usually there is some deed left undone or some penance to be paid. The spirit of the person refuses to leave the plane (or demiplane) on which he died, becoming a geist instead.

Greater Geist: These spirits can cast illusions that include sound. However, the illusions always have a transparent quality to them and are never believed to be real. The greater geist can make itself appear as solid flesh, though it is not. It can alter the appearance of its clothing and the condition of its body. For example, it might choose to remove its head and carry it around. It cannot change its appearance to resemble another person, however; physical size, facial features, hair color, etc. always remain the same. A greater geist looks as it did in life, at the time of death.

Gremishka

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (13-14)
TREASURE:	Z
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING:	3-18
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	½ (1d4 hit points)
THAC0:	20 (18 for big targets)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	+4 saves
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (2' tall)
MORALE:	Unsteady
XP VALUE:	35

Like their close cousins, the gremlins, these diminutive humanoids are parasites and nuisances. They live under buildings and steal from the inhabitants. From a distance, a gremishka might be mistaken for a small dog or a large cat. It is furry, with pointy ears and a protruding muzzle. The fur can be of any color or pattern. The mouth is overly large for the face, as are the yellow eyes, which have vertical pupils like those of a cat. Unlike a gremlin, the gremishka has no wings.

This creature can manipulate any tool with its dexterous fingers. A gremishka rarely totes a weapon around for more than an hour before dropping it or hiding it, however. It wears no armor or clothing, although it understands the uses of both.

Combat: Gremishkas do not engage in hand-to-hand combat unless they are trapped or cornered. They are extremely fast and nimble, able to slip between legs or around their opponents. This speed gives them their unusually high armor class and a +4 bonus to saving throws vs. weapons with an area effect. They gain a +2 bonus to hit any opponent over 4' tall, because the opponent makes such a nice, big target.

As a group, gremishkas employ a tactic of swarming. They climb onto an opponent en masse, biting and tearing at him. They must make a successful attack roll to get a good grip, but each round after that, damage is automatic. Half the gremishkas in the swarm will gnaw through straps, open clasps, or filch anything that is not tied down. Anyone who attacks a swarming gremishka may harm the character beneath the creatures. If the attacker inflicts more damage than is needed to kill the gremishka, the character beneath the swarm takes the extra damage. The gremishkas' low morale may cause them to retreat if any great show of force is made. Of course, anything the creatures manage to filch will be taken back to their lair.

Habitat/Society: Gremishkas are not fond of sunlight, but it does not harm them. They live in and under the basements of buildings, which are usually large homes. If possible, they choose a lair that gives them easy access to many parts of the building.

They keep the spoils of their raids in the lair. Treasure is always a random collection of stolen trinkets, some with real value. They love to take things, although their taste in treasure is dubious at best.

Gremishkas seem to derive extreme pleasure from the rage and frustration of larger humanoids. They enjoy playing vicious, destructive pranks on their hosts. They recognize no leaders among their own kind. They may cooperate to cause mischief, however, and follow the cue and instructions of a gremlin that suggested a prank. Some of their traps get very elaborate, indicating their relatively high intelligence. They hide in the walls and under floorboards to watch and listen for potential victims. When a victim discovers the prank or activates their trap, he often hears the gremlins' high, chittering laughter.

Ecology: Gremishkas eat anything. They trap small creatures such as rats, cats, small dogs, and sometimes even little children. They have been known to form a temporary attachment to captive children who are their size, but eventually they may devour them nonetheless. Gremishkas are hunted by just about anything that can find and catch them. Predators include large snakes, dogs, giant spiders, kobolds, and many more—especially men.

Lycanthrope, Loup-Garou

	LOWLAND	MOUNTAIN
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate forests, hills	Temperate hills, mountains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pack	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night	Night
DIET:	Carnivore	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Highly (13-14)	Highly (13-14)
TREASURE:	K,M	R
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-12 (2d6)	3-10 (1d10+2)
ARMOR CLASS:	4	3
MOVEMENT:	15 (18)	15 (18)
HIT DICE:	5+4	7
THAC0:	15	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 (1)	3 (1)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/1-4/2-8 (2-8)	1-4/1-4/2-8 (2-8)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Surprise	Surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Hit only by silver or magical weapons	Hit only by gold or magical weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%	40%
SIZE:	M (6' tall)	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13)	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	2,000	4,000

Loup-garous are powerful cousins of the common werewolf. Like most true werewolves in Ravenloft, they can assume three forms: human, man-wolf, and wolf. The human form is completely normal. The loup-garou always looks the same in its human form, just as it looks the same in its wolf or man-wolf form

As a man-wolf, it stands about 7' tall and is extremely muscular. The body is fur-covered and has a short tail, wolflike legs, and a wolf's head. The creature walks erect and can manipulate things with its hands. In this form, the werewolf can talk, although its voice is low and raspy.

As a wolf, a lowland loup-garou looks just like a worg wolf. (Their mountain cousins are larger; see below.) The creature is swiftest in this form, but cannot handle tools or weapons, and cannot talk.

Combat: The creature needs a full round to change from one form to another. The human can belong to any character class or experience level, although most loup-garous tend to be warriors or thieves. The experience level nevers affects hit dice or hit points. Werewolves without a character class are treated as 1st level fighters.

In man-wolf form, the loup-garou can attack 3 times per round, once with each clawed hand and with a bite. It can use a weapon, but then only gets one attack per round. The creature has a Strength of 18/00 in this form, and gains the appropriate combat bonuses.

In wolf form, a loup-garou can attack only once each round by biting. This form has the advantage of speed and surprise, however. (Loup-garous do not gain any special surprise bonus in their other forms.) The wolf form is also less conspicuous than the man-wolf, appearing as a normal animal rather than a supernatural creature.

In any form, the lowland loup-garou has some natural resistance to magic. Its mental capacity remains the same regardless of shape. The creature can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons. Silver weapons do normal damage, but magical weapons only do as much damage as their bonus. For example, a *sword +1* can inflict no more than 1 point of damage per successful hit, regardless of the damage roll. A character's Strength bonus does not apply. A blessed weapon (or other specialty weapon with a bonus) inflicts 1 point of damage per hit.

Habitat/Society: Lowland packs wander the Ravenloft domains in search of prey. They prefer humans. In the wild, lowland packs often use a cave or ruined building as a den. They also have been known to travel as humans and stay in inns. They hate other lycanthropes and especially wolfweres. See the *Monstrous Compendium I* lycanthrope entry for more information.

Ecology: The werewolf's most fearsome aspect is the infection its bite can cause. Any infected human or humanoid can become a werewolf when the condition is triggered (frequently by the 3 days of a full moon). The infected werewolf can be controlled by the true werewolf that infected him. In animal form, the infected creature is a semi-intelligent (3), raging beast. It takes a full turn for an infected werewolf to change from man to wolf or vice versa.

Mountain Loup-garous: This larger species is as big as a dire wolf when in wolf form. It can only be hurt by gold or magical weapons. It is more highly magic resistant than many types of werewolves, and can regenerate 1 hit point per turn. Mountain loup-garous are more likely to hunt alone than other forms of werewolf.

Odem

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (13-14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	N/A
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	N/A
THAC0:	N/A
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Possession
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	Immune to physical damage
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	N/A
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	1,000

An odem is an undead spirit that moves into living bodies and takes control of them. It is invisible to normal sight. Characters who can perceive ethereal objects see the odem as a white vapor when it is outside a body. When it is inside a body, they see a white aura about the face, which is concentrated at the eyes and mouth. The creature also appears as a white vapor on the ethereal plane.

Combat: When it is outside a living body, the odem does not fight. In this state, it is invisible. It is also immune to any form of physical attack, as well as to any magical attack that inflicts damage. Any of the spells designed to force extraplanar creatures to retreat or leave the prime material plane (*banishment*, *dismissal*, etc.) will indeed banish an odem from that plane. In the demiplane of Ravenloft, these spells only drive it from the host body and make it flee the region. This assumes that the person casting the spell can see the odem. An odem cannot be turned by a priest.

The odem inhabits a body by entering an orifice such as the mouth, nose, or ears. It can inhabit any living humanoid creature. Once inside the body, the odem is immune to any spell except *wish* or *magic jar*, which can drive it from the host body and repel the wizard's spirit back into the receptacle.

The inhabited body is quite vulnerable to harm while inhabited by the odem. Since the mind in control is that of the odem, spells affecting the mind don't work. If the host body is killed, the odem must find a new victim.

An odem can pass through any physical object, but not through a magical restraint. A spell such as *trap the soul*, *temporal stasis*, or *imprisonment* would imprison the odem and/or its host body.

An odem does not kill its victim or deaden his or her thoughts. If the victim's body were a coach, and the mind its driver, the odem would bind and gag the driver and take the reins himself. Like the poor driver who sits bound and gagged in the coach, the person whose body has been hijacked is completely aware of everything the odem is doing. He simply is helpless to act. He can even communicate telepathically with the odem if he wishes. If the odem is driven out, the character returns to normal. Of course, the victim may be "handed the reins" to a body that is weary at best and wounded at worst, depending on the odem's activity.

The goal of the odem is always to cause mayhem and destruction. It feeds on the fear, anger, and hate of those around it. Since it is not harmed by the death of its host, it considers the host quite expendable. Typically, it attempts to start fights with insults or even physical abuse. It also may steal from one person and plant the goods on another.

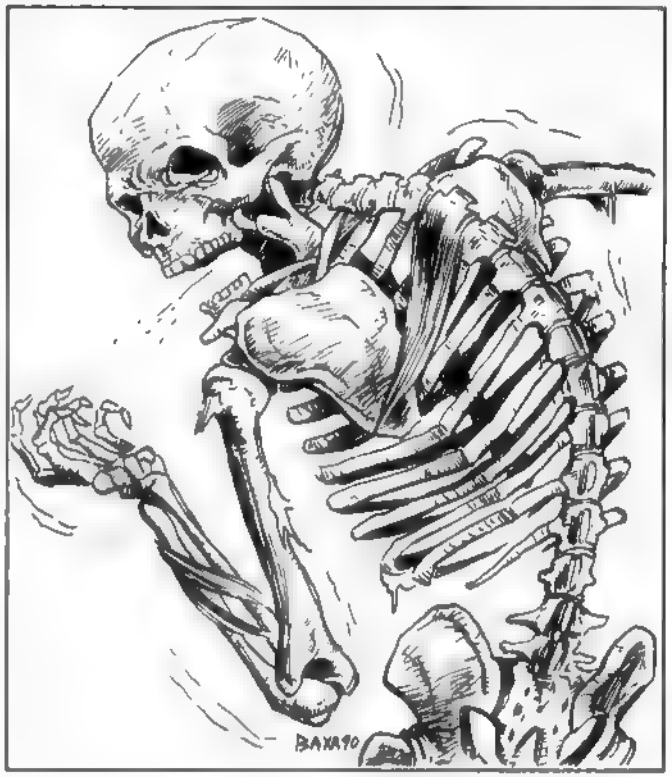
Habitat/Society: The odem wanders the border of the ethereal plane, and peers into the prime material plane. It searches for victims with great potential for fear, anger, or hate. The odem is a solitary undead spirit and therefore has no society.

Ecology: The odem is an evil undead spirit. Vicious or murderous characters of great willpower may become odems when they die

Strahd Skeleton

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any in Barovia
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Nil
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Non (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	2-20 (2d10)
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3/2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 (weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	Turn as wights
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	420



Strahd skeletons are magically animated undead monsters, created as guardians or warriors by Count Strahd Von Zarovich. The Count is the vampire lord of Barovia, in the demiplane Ravenloft.

Unlike common skeletons, Strahd's creatures still bear bits of leathery flesh, as well as shreds of clothing. Otherwise, they are nothing but bones. They are still distinctly a skeleton and not a zombie. Magic holds the joints together and moves the bones; there is not enough tissue to do it.

Strahd skeletons cannot make vocal sounds, but when they move, their bones clatter softly. Their motions are swift but jerky. In the blink of an eye, they can attain full speed from a dead stop. They have no odor other than the faint suggestion of dust and freshly dug earth.

Combat: Strahd skeletons always wield a weapon of some sort, even if it is just a table leg for a club. Regardless of the weapon, they can only inflict 1-6 points of damage per attack. They have long since forgotten their fighting skills. However, their unusual speed does allow them 2 attacks every other round

Poking weapons, such as spears or arrows, slide harmlessly between the bones of these creatures, inflicting no damage. Polearms, spears, and such can be used like a quarter staff. Edged weapons and blunt, smashing weapons are effective against these creatures, but they only do half damage. Any magical blunt weapon inflicts full, normal damage.

These monsters can detect invisible creatures within 30 feet. The highly magical nature of Strahd skeletons gives them a 20% magic resistance. Like all undead, they are immune to *sleep, charm, hold* and other mind control spells. Being Strahd's creatures, they are as difficult to turn as wights. They have no flesh to speak of, so cold-based attacks cannot harm them.

Habitat/Society: Strahd skeletons lurk in dungeons, graveyards, or anywhere in Castle Ravenloft. The Count has been known to post them anywhere in Barovia where they may be of service. A band of skeletons supposedly lies in waiting somewhere beneath the surface of the River Ivlis.

As mindless undead, these creatures have no society. They obey any orders given to them. The commands must be simple—a single sentence of no more than a dozen words.

While in Barovia, they can report back to Strahd if it is a part of their orders. It takes a full turn to establish communication, assuming he bothers to respond. The can only communicate a simple feeling of success or failure.

Ecology: Strahd Skeletons are not a part of nature. Only Strahd Von Zarovich knows the arcane ritual that brings about their creation. For raw material, he requires human skeletons that still include the skull and 90% of the bones.

Strahd Zombie

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any Barovia
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Nil
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Non (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1-3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	Turn as mummies
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	270

Strahd zombies are a form of undead created by Count Strahd Von Zarovich. The Count is the vampire lord of Barovia, in the demiplane Ravenloft.

These horrible creatures are human bodies that have been resurrected into living death. They wear the remains of the armor and clothing they wore at the time of death. Since many of them were once guards at Castle Ravenloft, 50% of these zombies wear useless, rag-tag pieces of armor. They never carry weapons or tools.

Strahd zombies appear fragile. Their gray-green flesh looks soft, and even their bones seem brittle. Their eyes are dark empty pits that somehow seem to see anyway. The zombies lips and cheeks have shrunken back, revealing large, crooked teeth. Their hands end in sharp, talonlike nails, which bear little resemblance to a normal person's fingernails.

Strahd zombies smell like normal zombies. In other words, they exude a rotting stench that is noticeable up to 100 feet away if it's unobstructed.

Strahd zombies can utter only two sounds. Neither vocalization causes their mouths to move discernibly. The first is a low moan, which signifies an eagerness to act. The second is a mutilated whisper of the name "Strahd." If a character declares that he wants to figure out what these creatures are hissing, he must make an Intelligence check to decipher it.

Combat: The sight of a Strahd zombie requires a horror check. If the viewer sees the vestiges of someone he once knew among the zombies, a −4 penalty is applied. Despite their fragile appearance, the negative plane energy is very strong in Strahd zombies. The power of Strahd Von Zarovich runs through them, making them as difficult to turn as mummies.

Like the common zombie, a Strahd zombie always strikes last in the round. Initially, it can attack once per round with a taloned hand. Eventually, it may not have a hand to strike with, however. Any single hit of 5 points or more against a zombie severs a limb. Since they always reach out with arms extended, that usually indicates an arm. When both arms are gone, the head is the next logical target, since the zombie leans forward in an attempt to bite its victim. If an opponent attempts to hit something other than an arm or the head, he suffers a penalty to his attack roll. If he rolls a natural 1, he hits an arm or the head anyway (whichever is thrust forward).

The zombie's severed head and arms can continue to move, at a rate of 1. The arms move like an inch worm, while the head rolls around. They can attack independently from the body once severed. If other body parts are severed, they flop around but cannot attack. The first time a character sees the severed limbs moving to attack, he must make another horror check. This time he gains a +2 bonus for having already stood his ground against the foul creatures.

The life force of a Strahd zombie is shared between all fallen body parts. When any body part suffers damage, the hit points are subtracted from the total of the whole. If the zombie is reduced to 0 total hit points, all body parts cease to move and attack.

Habitat/Society: Strahd zombies lurk in dungeons and graveyards, particularly around Castle Ravenloft. Being mindless undead, they have no society.

These zombies follow whatever order their master (Strahd) gives them. It must be a simple, single sentence of 20 words or less. They never check for morale, always following their orders until completely destroyed.

When in their native land of Barovia, Strahd zombies can "report back" to Strahd if it is a part of their orders. It takes them a full turn of inactivity to establish contact. Even then, there is a chance that Strahd may be too busy to listen. The report takes the form of a sensation; Strahd receives a simple feeling of success or failure. This ability is a part of Strahd and his attachment to the land of Barovia. It is not an inherent capability of the zombies.

Ecology: Strahd zombies are not a part of Nature, nor are they part of the warped quality of Ravenloft. They are created with an arcane formula known only to Strahd Von Zarovich. He can create them only from the dead bodies of humans.

Vampire, Nosferatu

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Variable (3-18)
TREASURE:	F
ALIGNMENT:	Any Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 18 (C)
HIT DICE:	8+3
THAC0:	13, 11 w/weapon
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon, +4 Strength bonus
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES::	+1 or better magical weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5'-6' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	2000

Nosferatus are variants of the common vampire (see *Monstrous Compendium 1*). Like other vampires, nosferatu can be of any humanoid stock.

During the night hours, a nosferatu vampire looks like a normal member of its race, though its skin is usually pale. At sunrise, a nosferatu falls into a deathlike coma. If it has fed within the last 2 hours, its complexion appears slightly flushed. If cut or stabbed, the creature bleeds. As the day wears on, the body begins to lose its fresh appearance. The face becomes gaunt and the flesh turns gray.

Combat: The common vampire drains levels. The nosferatu vampire drains Constitution points instead. Nosferatus have all other strengths and weaknesses of a common vampire.

The nosferatu has no obvious melee attack. It can use the punching and wrestling system, or throw dangerous and heavy objects. Otherwise it must use a weapon or spells just like other humanoids. Its Strength does give it a +2 bonus to hit and a +4 bonus on damage. Smart or powerful nosferatus always have some sort of magical weapon available.

The nosferatu vampire only attacks weak or charmed prey. To drain its victim of Constitution, it must bite him—usually on the neck—and drink his blood. If the victim is resisting, this action does require an attack roll. Armor protects a victim if it covers the bite site. Once a bite is successful, the draining is automatic. Usually the victim loses 1 point per round, allowing the nosferatu to savor the slow death of its prey. If necessary, however, a nosferatu can drain at a rate of 3 points per round.

While draining its victim, this vampire's only attack or defense is its charm gaze. It can of course elect to stop the drain. The nosferatu's victims regain lost Constitution points at a rate of 1 point every 2 days.

Using a form of telepathy, a nosferatu can charm from afar any person it has bitten. The victim is vulnerable to these charms for the rest of his life, or until a *remove curse* is cast by a priest of 14th level or higher. The communication is one way. The nosferatu gives instructions to its victim, but the victim cannot relay anything to the vampire. The nosferatu must be within 360 feet, and the victim can make a saving throw vs. spells each turn to avoid the charm.

Habitat/Society: Most nosferatus live in cemeteries or other abandoned places. They hunt at night and return to their coffins during the day. Usually, a nosferatu hides a minimum of 3 or 4 coffins, each in a different location.

Nosferatus do not associate with each other, unless it is a master-to-slave relationship. If an encounter between equal nosferatus occurs, combat usually ensues. The loser typically must leave to find a new haunt.

Most nosfertus live from feeding to feeding, but a few aspire to more. These dangerous creatures usually become vampire lords, with several slave nosferatu. In rare instances, they may acquire new abilities, having been embraced by the misty fingers of Ravenloft.

Ecology: Like the common vampire, a nosferatu needs blood. Unless it can drain at least 3 Constitution points from a victim each night, it loses 1 hit die. The loss is cumulative, and continues every night until enough blood is consumed or the nosferatu is reduced to 4 hit dice. At 4 hit dice, the creature ceases to decline further, but it goes berserk if it is within 40 feet of a viable humanoid victim.

If attacking a humanoid victim is impractical, a nosferatu can restore nearly all of its hit dice by drinking the blood of an animal. Animal feedings, no matter how frequent, leave the creature 1 hit die below normal.

Nosferatus also need sleep. They lose 1 hit die for each day that is void of proper rest. "Proper rest" involves lying in a coffin with a handful of soil from its original grave for approximately 8 hours. A nosferatu can regain 1 hit die after a day of proper rest, provided it has drained at least 6 Constitution points during the previous night. To regain all lost hit dice, it may need to engorge itself several nights in a row.

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Monsters and Militia

Selected Soldiers and Strong-arming Lawmen

Domain	Level	THAC0	Dmg	AC	HP	Comments
Borca	1	20	1d10	8	5	Leather armor, halberd
Darkon	2	19	1d6	6	10	Studded leather, shield, shortsword
Kargat	5	16	1d8	4	25	The Darkon secret police, banded mail, long sword
Dementlieu	2	19	1d6	7	10	Studded leather armor, short sword, whip
Dorvinia	1	20	1d6	7	5	Studded leather armor, mace
Lamordia	1	20	1d6	8	5	Leather armor, club
G'Henna	1 Pr	20	1d4	8	4	Leather armor, scourge and spells
Gundarak	2	19	1d8	4	10	Splint mail, bastard sword, mace
Falkovnia	3	18	1d6	5	15	Scale mail, shield, spear or polearm
Elite	5	16	1d8	4	25	Banded mail, sword, polearm (partisan, 1d6, 2d6 against a charge)
Hazlan	1	20	1d4+1	6	5	Scale mail, warhammer
Mordent	1	20	1d6+1	8	5	Leather armor, mace
Nova Vaasa	1	20	1d6	7	5	Ring mail, clubs, no dagger
Sanguinia	2	19	1d6	6	10	Hide armor, club
Sithicus	2 R	19	1d6	7	10	Elven rangers, studded leather, short swords, long bows
Sri Raji	2	19	1d4	8	10	Leather armor, scourge
Valachan	2	19	2d4	7	10	Ring mail, morning star
Zherisia	1	20	1d6	8	5	Leather armor, club, no dagger

Unlisted domains do not have town militia or standing armies.
Pr = Priest, R = Ranger.

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Monsters Lurking in Ravenloft

The creatures below fit the flavor of the Ravenloft campaign setting. Consult this list when you're designing your own adventures for the "demiplane of dread."

Aerial Servant
Bats
Beast, Undead (DL)
Beastmen (GH)
Berbalang (FR)
Claw, Crawling (FR)
Cloaker (FR)
Crypt Thing (GH)
Darkenbeast (FR)
Death, Crimson (FR)
Disir (DL)
Doppleganger
Dragon, Shadow (GH)
Dreamshadow (DL)
Dreamwraith (DL)
Fetch (DL)
Gargoyle
Geist (RL)
Ghost
Ghoul
Goblins
Golems
Gremlins (GH)
Griffon
Grimishka (RL)
Groaning spirit
Gurik Cha'ahl (DL)
Hag
Haunt
Haunt, Knight (DL)
Hell Hound
Heucuva
Hippogriff
Hobgoblin
Hobgoblin, Norker (GH)
Homonculous
Hound, Yeth (GH)
Imp
Imp, Blood sea (DL)
Invisible Stalker
Jackalwere
Jermlaine
Kani Doll (DL)
Kelpie
Knight, death (DL)
Kobold
Kyuss, Son of (GH)
Leucrotta
Lich
Lycanthropes
Mind Flayer
Mist, Vampiric (GH)
Mite (GH)
Mummy
Naga
Necrophidius (GH)
Odem (RL)
Pegasus
Poltergeist
Rakshasa
Raven (GH)
Revenant (FR)
Sahuagin
Satyr
Scarecrow (GH)
Shadow
Shadow, Slow (GH)
Shambling Mound
Skeleton
Snake
Spectral Minion (DL)
Spectre
Spider
Strahd Skeletons (RL)
Strahd Zombies (RL)
Unicorn
Vampire
Vampire, Nosferatu (RL)
Warrior, Skeleton (DL)
Wichtlin (DL)
Wight
Will o'wisp
Wolf
Wolf, Mist (GH)
Wolfwere
Wraith
Wraith (GH)
Yaggol (DL)
Zombie
Zombie, Sea

"Native" Settings: (FR) = Forgotten Realms (DL) = Dragonlance (GH) = Greyhawk (RL) = Ravenloft.

Tables of Terror

Turning Undead in Ravenloft

Level of Undead	Level of the Priest											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-11	12-13	14+
Skeleton or 1HD	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
Zombie	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
Ghoul or 2HD	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*
Shadow or 3-4HD	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*	1*
Wight or 5HD	—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*	1*
Ghast	—		20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1	1*
Wraith or 6HD	—		—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1	1
Mummy or 7HD	—		—		20	19	16	13	10	7	4	1
Spectre or 8HD	—		—		—	20	19	16	13	10	7	4
Vampire or 9HD	—		—		—		20	19	16	13	10	7
Ghost or 10HD	—		—		—		—	20	19	16	13	10
Lich or 11+HD	—		—		—		—		20	19	16	13
Special	—		—		—		—		—	20	19	16

* If the undead cannot flee at its current maximum rate, or get out of the line of sight, it is destroyed.

Note: Penalties may apply. For example, if the lord is within 300 feet of his undead minions, the priest usually suffers a −2 penalty to all turning attempts.

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Undead That Cannot Be Turned

Claw, Crawling (FR)
Crypt Thing (GH)
Dracolich (FR)
Dreamshadow (DL)
Dreamwraith (DL)
Fetch (DL)
Fireshadow (DL)
Geist (RL)
Haunt
Haunt, Knight (DL)
Knight, Death (DL)
Necrophidius (GH)
Odem (RL)
Phantom (GH)
Revenant (FR)
Scarecrow (GH)
Spectral Minion (DL)
Vampiric Mist (GH)
Warrior, Skeleton (DL)
Yellow Musk Creeper & Zombie
Zombie, Sea (GH)

Undead by Hit Dice

HD	Undead
1	Animal Skeleton
2	Poltergeist
	Lacedon
	Ghoul
4	Slow Shadow (GH)
5	Monster Skeleton
	Heucuva
	Strahd Skeletons (RL)
	Zombie, Monster
7	Strahd Zombies (RL)
	Kyuss, Sons of (GH)
8	Zombie, Ju-ju
	Wichtlin (DL)
9	Wraith, Swordwraith (GH)
	Vampire, Nosferatu (RL)
Special	Beast, Undead (DL)
	Groaning Spirit (Banshee)
Var	Wraith, Soul Becknoner (GH)

Fear Check Modifiers

+4 Spell specifically helpful vs. threat
+4 Magical item specifically helpful vs. threat
+4 Friend or family endangered
+1 Facing threat again on same day
+2 Know how to overcome threat
+2 (optional) Previous success vs. same in current adventure
−2 Previously defeated by similar threat

Fear Check Failure

- Flee in panic!
- 60% base chance (- 5%/level) to drop items 25% base chance (- level) of spell failure
- If cornered: -2 penalty to all die rolls and AC

Fear Recovery

- Recover 1d4 rnds after away from threat
- Or by spell such as.
  - *remove fear* (negates)
  - *forget* (allows new save)
  - *emotion* (courage: cancels results, no bonuses)

Horror Check Modifiers

+1 Evil alignment
−1 Lawful good alignment
+1 Open area
−1 Closed area
−2 Know person in horror scene
−4 Friend or family endangered
+2 (optional) Previous success vs. same in current adventure

Failed Horror Check Results—Condensed

All victims are stunned for 1 round and suffer one of the following effects. (Roll d6.)

1 **Aversion:** Cannot bear same or similar scenes for 1 month. In open area, must get 30' away; has 1 rnd to comply or is fearstruck.
2 **Revulsion:** Intense form of aversion. Can't bear scene or anything suggestive of it.
3 **Obsession:** Continually talks of event. Can't sleep (no healing, −1/day combat roll penalty to −4 max, no spell memorization). *Sleep* prevents combat penalty, allows spell memorization. Save once/week to recover
4* **Senseless Rage:** "Berserk." Attacks to scene (+2 to-hit, dmg, double attack rate). Stops w/successful save on rnds 4, 6, or 8, etc.
5* **Mental Shock:** Stunned until save. Can save on rnds 4, 5, and 6, thereafter once/hour
6* **Fearstruck:** Same as failed fear check.

*For 1 month, victim saves vs. similar scenes with −2 penalty; failure yields same result (no d6 roll).

Altered Magic

Wizard Spells

*Animate Dead (5th)
Astral Spell (9th)
Banishment (7th)
**Bestow Curse*/Remove Curse (4th)
*Chill Touch (1st)
Clairaudience (3rd)
Clairvoyance (3rd)
Conjure Elemental (5th)
Conjure Animals (6th)
Contact Other Plane (5th)
*Contagion (4th)
*Control Undead (7th)
*Death Spell (6th)
Detect Undead (1st)
Detect Evil/*Detect Good* (2nd)
Detect Good/Detect Evil (2nd)
Dismissal (5th)
*Energy Drain (9th)
*Enervation (4th)
Ensnarement (6th)
ESP (2nd)
*Feign Undead (5th) (new spell)
*Feign Death (3rd)
Find Familiar (1st)
*Finger of Death (7th)
*Gate (9th)
Geas (6th)
Hold Undead (3rd)
Limited Wish (7th)
*Magic Jar (5th)
Magic Mirror (4th)
Monster Summoning I-VII (3rd-9th)
*Reincarnation (6th)
Remove Curse/**Bestow Curse* (4th)
Shadow Walk (7th)
*Spectral Hand (2nd)
Succor/*Succor* (9th)
*Summon Shadow (5th)
Teleport (5th)
Teleport Without Error (7th)
True Seeing (6th)
*Vampiric Touch (3rd)
Wish (9th)

Priest Spells

Abjure (4th)
*Animate Dead (3rd)
Astral Spell (7th)
**Bestow Curse*/Remove Curse (3rd)
Call Woodland Beings (4th)
**Cause Disease*/Cure Disease (3rd)
Commune (5th)
Conjure Earth Elemental/*Dismiss Earth Elemental* (7th)
Conjure Fire Elemental/*Dismiss Fire Elemental* (6th)
Cure Disease/**Cause Disease* (3rd)
**Destruction*/*Resurrection (7th)
Dismiss Earth Elemental/Conjure Earth Elemental (7th)
Dismiss Fire Elemental/Conjure Fire Elemental (6th)
Dispel Good/Dispel Evil (5th)
Dispel Evil/*Dispel Good* (5th)
**Energy Drain*/Restoration (7th)
*Feign Death (3rd)
*Feign Undead (4th, new)
Find the Path (6th)
*Gate (7th)
Holy Word/**Unholy Word* (7th)
Know Alignment (2nd)
Magic Font (5th)
Negative Plane Protection (3rd)
Plane Shift (5th)
Quest (5th)
*Raise Dead/**Slay Living* (5th)
Reflecting Pool (4th)
*Reincarnation (7th)
Remove Fear (1st)
Remove Curse/**Bestow Curse* (3rd)
Restoration/**Energy Drain* (7th)
*Resurrection/**Destruction* (7th)
**Slay Living*/* Raise Dead (5th)
*Speak With Dead (3rd)
Succor/*Succor* (7th)
True Seeing (5th)
**Unholy Word*/Holy Word (7th)
Word of Recall (6th)

Magical Items

Potions
*Potion of Undead Control
Oil of Etherealness

Scrolls
Scroll of Protection - Undead

Rings
Ring of Djinni Summoning
*Ring of Vampiric Regeneration

Rods/Staves/Wands
*Rod of Rulership
Staff of the Magi

Miscellaneous
Amulet of Life Protection
Amulet of the Planes
Amulet vs. Undead
*Apparatus (new)
Bag of Beans
*Book of Vile Darkness
Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals
Brazier Commanding Fire Elementals
Censer Commanding Air Elementals
Crystal Ball
Cubic Gate
Flask of Curses
Gem of Seeing
Helm of Telepathy
Horn of Valhalla
*Libram of Ineffable Damnation
Medallion of ESP
Medallion of Thought Projection
*Mirror of Life Trapping
Phylactery of Monstrous Attention
*Sphere of Annihilation
Stone Commanding Earth Elementals
*Talisman of Ultimate Evil
Well of Many Worlds

Armor
Plate Mail of Etherealness

Weapons
*Sword +2, Nine Lives Stealer
*Sword of Arak (new)
*Sword of Life Stealing
Sword of the Planes

NOTES

Reversible spells are listed jointly; the spell in italics is the reverse.
"*" means a powers check is required with the use of this spell or magical item.

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d'HONAIRE

d'HONAIRE

Commissioned by Dominic d'Honaire in 722, this portrait shows the d'Honaires as they appeared 13 years ago. Dominic himself has scarcely changed. The others now appear considerably less well (One is dead.) The painting hangs in a gallery in Dominic's estate.

A. Dominic d'Honaire, Lord of Dementlieu A master manipulator and schemer from an early age, Dominic was particularly flirtatious as a boy Today, the more romanti cally attracted to a woman he becomes, the more hideous he appears to her; that is his curse in Ravenloft (Vital statistics are shown below. See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft for a complete description.)

B. Maurice d'Honaire, Dominic's uncle. Age 34 here, 47 today

C. Claude d'Honaire, Dominic's father. Age 43 here, 56 today.

D. Bernadette d'Honaire, Dominic's aunt. Age 44 here, dead today.

d'Honaire, Dominic

Lord of Dementlieu
7th Level Enchanter, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	10
Hit Points	18	Int	17
THAC0	18	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	see below		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Dominic has the combat abilities and spell effects of a 7th level enchanter, but he cannot actually cast spells. His voice can act as a *suggestion* spell at any time. His gaze can act as a *domination* spell. Dominic himself is completely immune to any sort of mental attack. He avoids personal combat at all costs. He has several powerful protectors, who will fight for him if necessary.

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DILISNYA • BORITSI

A

B

C

D

DILISNYA • BORITSI

This portrait was painted in 734, 1 year ago, at the request of Ivan Dilisnya. Ivana Boritsi, the woman standing at the right, did not pose for this rendering, and it does not flatter her. The painting hangs in a gallery of the Dilisnya estate.

A. Ivan Dilisnya, lord of Dorvinia. This foppish fiend is neither as regal nor as harmless as he appears. The crown and scepter are theatrical props. Ivan became the lord of Dorvinia after poisoning his sister and her husband in a jealous pique. He had hoped to murder his sister's nursing infant, too, but a midwife secretly spirited the babe away. Ivan's vital statistics are shown below. (See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft" for a complete description.)

B. Ivana Boritsi, lord of Borca. A poisoner like her evil cousin Ivan. Also a temptress. Her body harbors a poison to which she herself is immune. From these lips come the kiss of death. (See "Borca" under "Lands of the Core" for more information.)

C. Boris Dilisnya and Stefania Septow, Ivan's parents, now deceased. Painted in memory. Their costuming reflects Ivan's ego. They were nobles, not king and queen.

D. Camille Dilisnya, Ivana's mother, former lord of Borca. Ivana poisoned Camille in 711 and assumed control of the domain.

Dilisnya, Ivan

Lord of Dorvinia
0 level human, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (or by armor)	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	11
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	22
Hit Points	8	Int	18
THAC0	20	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	7
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	poison touch (see below)		
Special Defenses	see below		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Combat: Three times a day, Ivan can turn any object he touches into poison. Each time, he can choose one of three strengths for this toxin. A "deadly" toxin kills victims who fail their saving throw vs. poison. A "dangerous" toxin causes 4-24 (4d6) points of damage to characters who fail their saving throw. A "malingering" toxin takes hold like a sickness. Within an hour, victims become weak and cannot walk. They remain bedridden for 1-4 days.

Ivan himself is immune to all forms of poison, paralysis, and disease (including magical diseases). He is also a master chemist. In addition to his natural poisons, he can mix up a toxin or drug with virtually any effect. His favorite concoction lingers harmlessly in the victim's system for a day, then causes a sudden and violent death. Ivan has an antidote of sorts, but it merely delays the poison's release for another day. He keeps several retainers on this leash. Each day, they need the antidote or they will die. As long as Ivan alone knows the antidote, they must remain loyal to him.

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RENIER

A

B

C

RENIER

These brazen, black-hearted beauties are all wererats. The portrait was rendered 10 years ago, in 725, just one year before Jacqueline Renier became the lord of Richemulot. Jacqueline is the treacherous trollop in the center. The painting hangs in a gallery of the Renier estate.

A. Marie Renier, Jacqueline's mother. She murdered her husband, Simon Audaire, and gave her daughters her maiden name. Marie died five years ago, in 730.

B. Jacqueline Renier, lord of Richemulot. The devoted and talented granddaughter of Claude Renier, first ruler of the domain. Jacqueline assumed the lordship of Richemulot when Claude died in 726. Her vital statistics are shown below. See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft" for more information.

C. Louise Renier, Jacqueline's twin sister. Patiently awaiting her own rise to power.

Renier, Jacqueline

Lord of Richemulot
Wererat, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (6 in rat form)	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	3 + 1	Con	15
Hit Points	16	Int	15
THAC0	17	Wis	9
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Damage/Attack	by weapon		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by silver or +1 mag. weapon		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Combat: Jacqueline enjoys all the normal powers ascribed to a wererat. In addition, she can become a foul-smelling mist at will. She does not, however, smell like a sewer when in human form, and neither do members of her family. If wounded to the point of death, she automatically assumes gaseous form and flees. Jacqueline regains 1 hit point per day while in this form. She remains gaseous until her total hit points rise above 0 once more.

Regardless of form, Lord Renier can climb any surface including glass. She even can cling to the ceiling. When not in human form, she can gnaw through virtually any material given time. Any victim of her direct attack has 10 times the normal chance (10% per point of damage) of becoming a wererat under her control.

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TIMOTHY

A

B

C

TIMOTHY

This painting was rendered 10 years ago, in 725, by an artist who secured passage on Nathan Timothy's riverboat. (Nathan is seated in the center.) When the artist's work was complete, Nathan threw him to the wolves. Today the portrait is stashed in a chest on the boat.

A. Arabella Timothy. This woman's actual last name is unknown. Nathan kidnapped Arabella as she was washing clothes by the river. His first wife, Priscilla, drowned in 713. (According to rumor, the woman leapt overboard.) Nathan has infected Arabella with lycanthropy, and she is completely dominated by him.

B. Nathan Timothy, lord of Arkandale. Nathan is a werewolf, but the folk in Arkandale know him as a powerful river merchant. He rarely dresses in the finery shown here, preferring more simple sailor's or captain's garb. His vital statistics are listed below. See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft" for more information.

C. Alfred Timothy, Nathan's son, also a werewolf. Pictured here in his teens, today he is the lord of Verbrek. He left his father shortly after this was painted. Alfred has not seen his father since then, and never will again. (Both are imprisoned in their own domains.) See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft for more information.

Timothy, Nathan

Lord of Arkandale
Werewolf, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10 (5)	Str	15 (18/25)
Movement	12 (15)	Dex	13 (17)
Level/Hit Dice	5+4	Con	13 (19)
Hit Points	40	Int	16
THAC0	15	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	12
Damage/Attack	2-8 (2d4) or by weapon		
Special Attacks	surprise		
Special Defenses	hit only by +1 or greater magical weapon		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Combat: Nathan has the normal combat abilities of a werewolf, with the following exceptions. Only magical weapons can harm him, regardless of the form he takes. Silver has no effect. When wounded, he can regenerate 3 hit points per round. He cannot regenerate acid or poison damage, although he gains a +1 bonus to his saving throw vs. poison, because his Constitution is high. Like a troll, he can regenerate hit points even if he loses them all, which makes him very difficult to kill.

Ravenloft has given Nathan great power, but it also has cursed him. He must spend most of his life over water, confined within the boundaries of his own domain. Every hour that he is not on the water, he loses 1 hit point. When his total hit points drop to 0, he does not die, but must lie in agony until someone carries him to the River Musarde or one of its tributaries.

Nathan always carries a knife, more as a tool than as a weapon.

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WEATHERMAY

WEATHERMAY

The Weathermays are a wealthy, upstanding family in Mordent. This painting, completed over 12 years ago, was rendered in celebration of Alice Weathermay's wedding. (Alice is the smiling young woman at the left.) The portrait hangs in the library of Heather House, the family's ancestral estate.

A. Daniel Foxgrove, new husband of Alice Weathermay, who stands beside him. Today he is 40, a widower, and the father of twins.

B. Alice Weathermay, only daughter of Jules and Martha. She died in childbirth four years ago, in 731.

C. Jules Weathermay, head of the family. Today he is 60.

D. Martha Scoville Weathermay, wife of Jules, mother of Alice and George. Today she is 62 and in fragile health.

E. George Weathermay, son of Jules and Martha, brother of Alice. Barely 14 in this picture, today George is a righteous ranger who travels Ravenloft, battling the supernatural. His vital statistics are below. See "The *Who's Doomed* of Ravenloft" for more information.

Weathermay, George

7th Level Ranger, Neutral Good

Armor Class	8 (5 w/armor)	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	—	Con	14
Hit Points	40	Int	13
THAC0	14 (13 w/ missiles)	Wis	18
No. of Attacks	3/2	Cha	8
Damage/Attack	4-11 (1d8+3) sword 2-7 (1d6+1) hand axe		
Special Attacks	nil		
Special Defenses	+4 save vs. mental attack		
Magic Resistance	nil		

Combat: George has all the normal abilities of a 7th level ranger. He carries a *long sword +2* and a hand axe balanced for throwing. In combat he wields both without penalty (standard ranger ability). He can choose whether to use the axe for an attack or to increase his armor class by 1. He must make this decision before any combat rolls in the round at hand. If he throws the axe, that is his only action for the round.

George owns a medium warhorse named Perseus. The horse has a morale of 12 and is trained to throw any rider except George. Its saddle has three secret compartments, containing a silver dagger, a holy symbol, and a vial of holy water. George usually hides additional weapons and useful items on his person.

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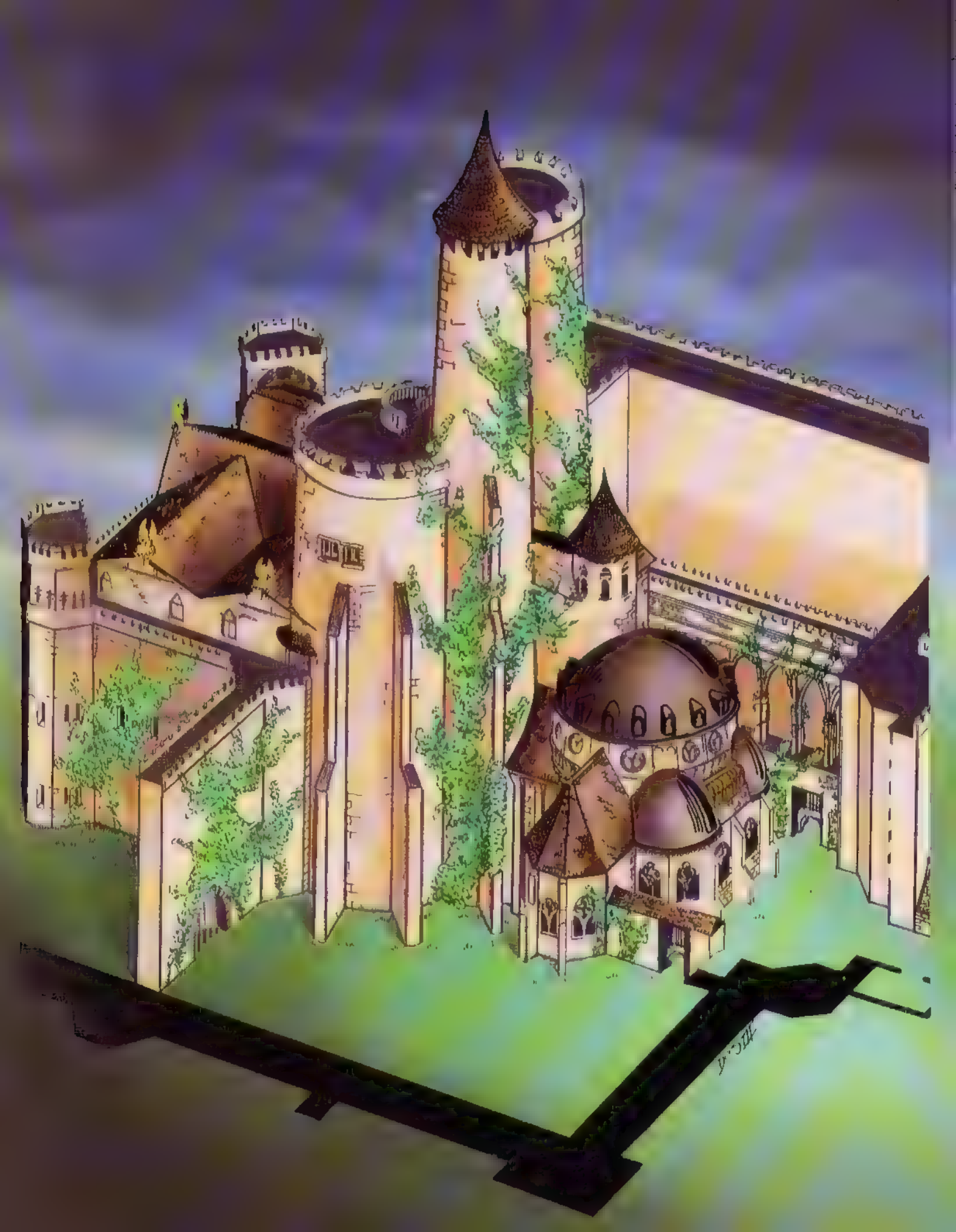


STRAHD'S CASTLE

The master vampire Strahd Von Zarovich, lord of Barovia, occupies this ancient castle. It stands upon a 1000-foot spire of rock, brooding over the Village of Barovia. Only a decaying drawbridge connects the castle to nearby cliffs.

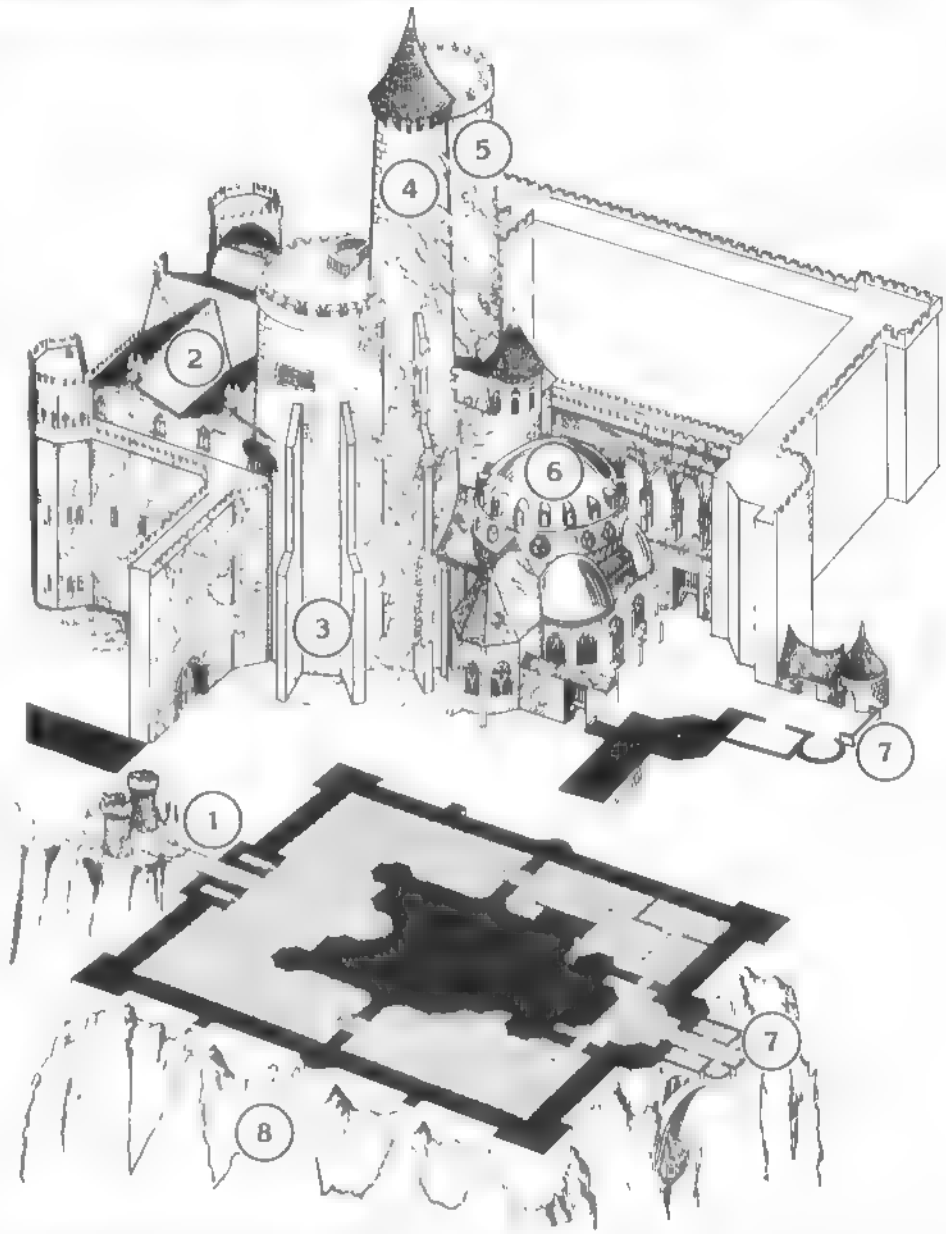
1. Main Entrance and Approach: The drawbridge stands opposite the main entrance. Visitors who cross the bridge pass through a short tunnel with a rotting wooden portcullis. The tunnel leads to the front courtyard. Two massive, ornate wooden doors form the main entrance to the castle.

2. Halls of Weeping: The main floor includes the great entry, a dining hall, and a guest's hall. Level two houses an audience hall. Level three contains "Rooms of Weeping," which were once the grand living quarters of the Von Zarovich family. Like most of the castle, these rooms are now cloaked in dust and decay.

3. South Tower: This squat tower houses witches and other evil spellcasters whom Strahd has enslaved.

4. High Tower: A circular stair winds through this narrow tower. Strahd sometimes can be found at the top, gazing over his lands.

5. Tower of Sorrow: This hollow tower is alive. A narrow staircase climbs the tower from top to bottom, spiraling along the wall. The staircase can shake and pitch, knocking intruders who have climbed the stairs into the dark, open well at the center.



6. Chapel: Many of the stained glass windows are broken and boarded up. Pews and benches lie in a jumbled disarray, and are coated with dust.

7. Overlook: A small overlook juts 20 feet out from the cliff face. Visitors who peer over the balcony can see a pair of dirt-caked windows in the cliff face below, about 100 feet under the platform.

8. Catacombs: Several floors beneath the castle are the crypts and catacombs that contain Strahd's resting place. The windowed room below the overlook is the tomb of Strahd's ancestors.

Editor's Note: The 1982 adventure 'Ravenloft' (product number 9075) contains complete floor plans for this castle.

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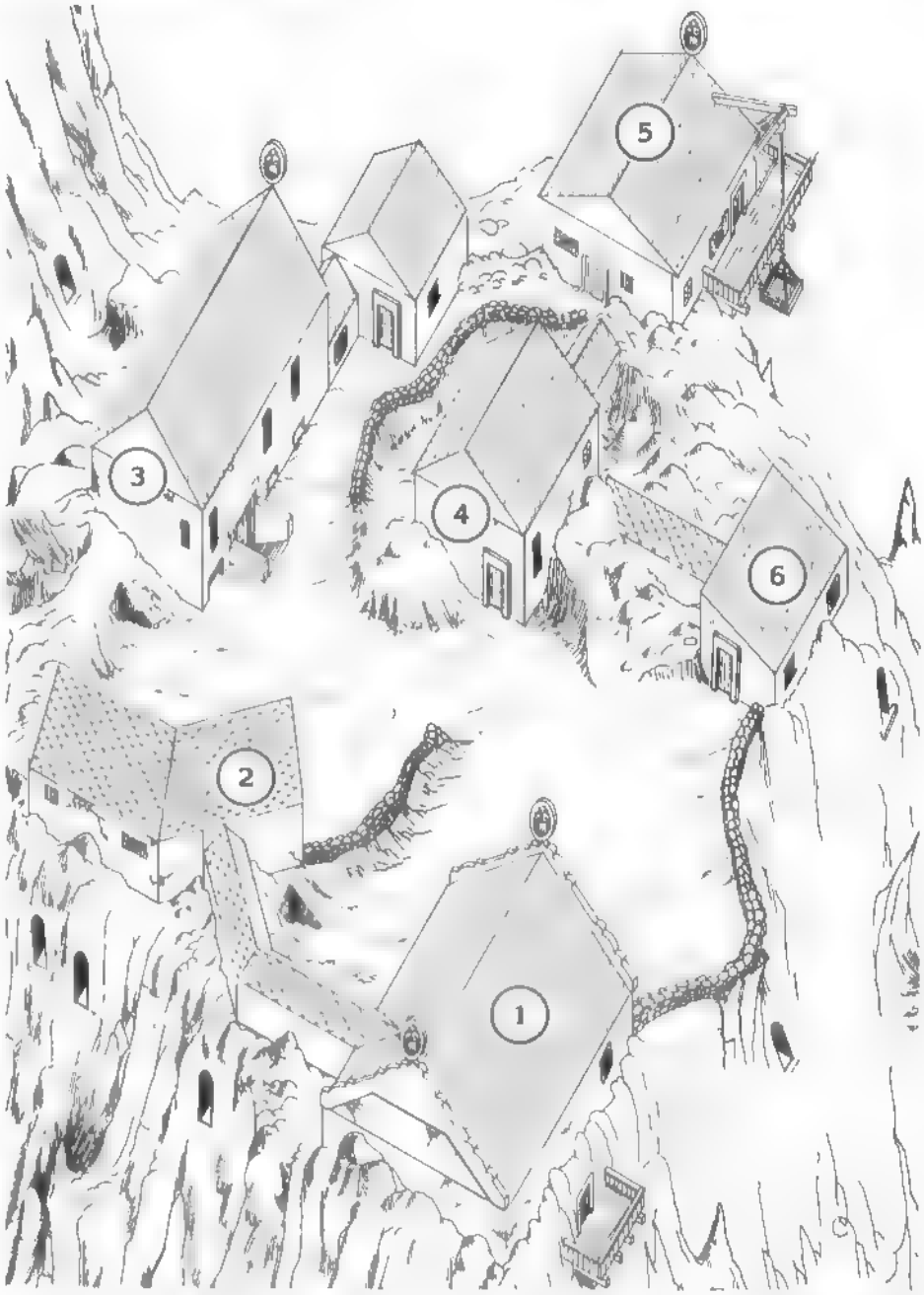
MONASTERY

The brothers who established this holy asylum have not lived for centuries. The monastery lies in the Balinok Mountains of Markovia, so close to the heavens that white clouds often hug the cliff face beneath it. The pinnacle on which the monastery rests is riddled with tunnels and caverns. The dark, arched windows pictured here were fashioned by the monks, and mark the position of underground rooms.

The sanctum is far removed from the horrors of the lord who rules below. Lord Markov and his beast men know nothing of this site. Elderly peasants in nearby Barovia sometimes relate fragmented tales of a sanctuary across the border—a tragic place once haunted by troubled souls who were bound here by misery and faith.

The isolated sanctum is virtually invisible to those who are ignorant of its position. Steep cliffs and jagged escarpments line the approach, and the ascent is deadly. The monks operated a lift to reach the mountain path far below. The lift still works.



1. Temple: The main hall of worship. The balcony offers a view that extends to the Barovian border.

2. Quarters: Each brother had a small, simple sleeping room in this building.

3. Hall of Necessity: The dining hall. The small building toward the cliff's edge is a kitchen.

4. Library: The monks' collected writings still are housed in this building. Its levels extend far below the surface. An aboveground passage joins the library to Contemplation Hall.

5. Lift House: The lift is a crude wooden basket dangling from a rope. It measures 10 feet square at the base. The monks used the lift to carry goods and visitors to and from the path below.

6. Contemplation Hall: Monks painstakingly copied books and scrolls in this building.

MONASTERY

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KARTAKAN INN

Harkon Lukas, the wolfwere who rules Kartakass, secretly lives at this inn. (Kartakans believe Lukas is a bard.) The inn lies in Skald, on a rock island in the river which flows rapidly past the village. Locals favor the inn as a dining hall, particularly at midday. But as the shadows start to lengthen, the customers become more brutish. The dining hall empties by late afternoon, and a crowd of drinkers forms in the taverna. Few who stay here after dark are heard from again—unless they happen to be wolfweres.

1. Kitchen: The aroma of baked beets drifts from this room, which was added to the original inn. A large root cellar lies below the kitchen, stocked with an ample supply of meekulbrau.

2. Dining Hall: The west wing of the inn houses the dining hall. Through the glass windows, guests can watch the rushing waters and activity in the town of Skald.

3. Drinking Hall: The east wing is reserved for the drinking crowd. Villagers know it's a rough place at night, and avoid it. Few of them realize that most of the ruffians are wolfweres.

4. Tower: The main floor of this octagonal tower contains a cloak room. Above it lie the secret chambers of Harkon Lukas. As the sun sets, Lukas often looks out from this room over Skald, his thoughts as dark as the coming night.

5. Stable: The north end of the stable contains an old, ornate coach. The villagers know it exists, but have rarely seen it in use.

6. Old Inn: This northern wing, along with the main building and the tower, are the oldest sections of the inn. Both levels of the north wing are filled with sleeping rooms. Travelers who lay their heads here may never lift them again.

7. Akriel's Chamber: A beautiful girl named Akriel sleeps in this room. She is considered a servant, but no one has ever seen her working.

8. Servants' Quarters: The upper story of the main building contains the servants' quarters and a secret meeting chamber of the wolfweres. Lukas presides over these meetings.

"Old Kartakan Inn and Taverna"

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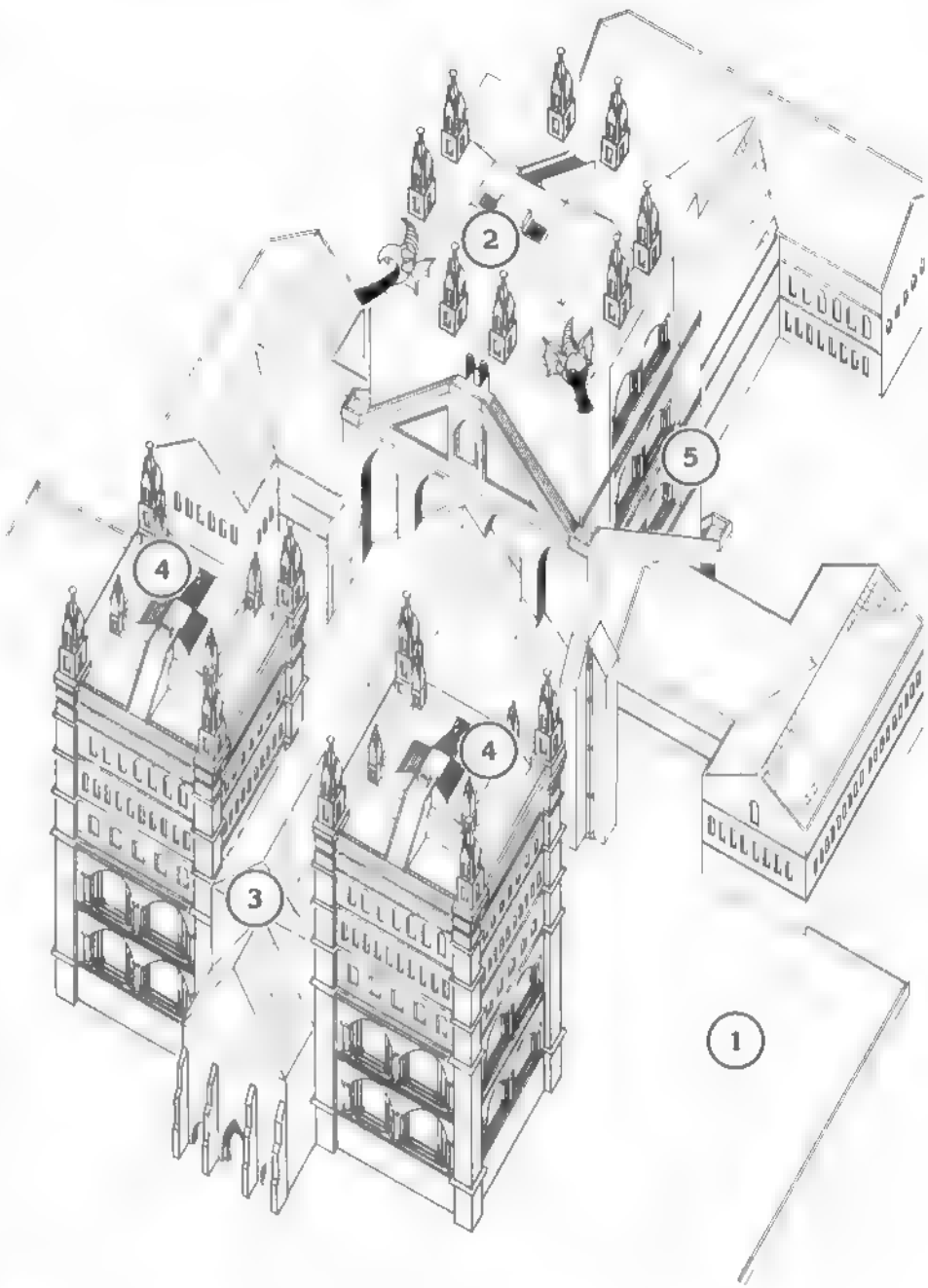
YAGNO PETROUNA'S TEMPLE

This evil house of worship is the home and workplace of Yagno Petrovna, lord of G'Henna. The building pictured here is the central structure of Yagno's extensive grounds.



1. Plaza of the Faithful: Visitors from other lands secretly call it the "Plaza of the Pitiful." Common folk gather here on holy days to cheer the grim rituals of the temple. It is a wide open area, its stones polished and worn from the shuffling of countless sandaled feet. The stones become slick and treacherous in misty weather. The plaza flanks the Hall of Zhakata and its minor altars.

2. High Altar: Yagno conducts major ceremonies upon the grand summit of this roof. His henchmen sometimes toss the bodies of mongrels into greased chutes at the top. The bodies fly from the gargoyles' gaping mouths at the corners, then plunge to the plaza below, sometimes injuring onlookers.

3. Hall of Zhakata: The main entrance to the temple leads visitors into this hall. The building is dedicated to the greater glory of the false god Zhakata. Most of the interior is open to the public.

4. Minor Altars: Similar to the high altar, these twin altars are reserved for lesser ceremonies.

5. Sanctuary: The priests under Yagno's command conduct their business in this building. Yagno lives and works here, on the uppermost floor. A processional walkway with steep staircases rings the outside of the building. The walkway ends at a pair of archways below the gargoyles, where the procession enters the sanctuary. The hall inside leads to the high altar atop the building. During many ceremonies, the rear of the procession remains on the steep stairs leading to the archways, their red robes forming a crimson arrow which points toward the altar.

"Temple of Zhakata"

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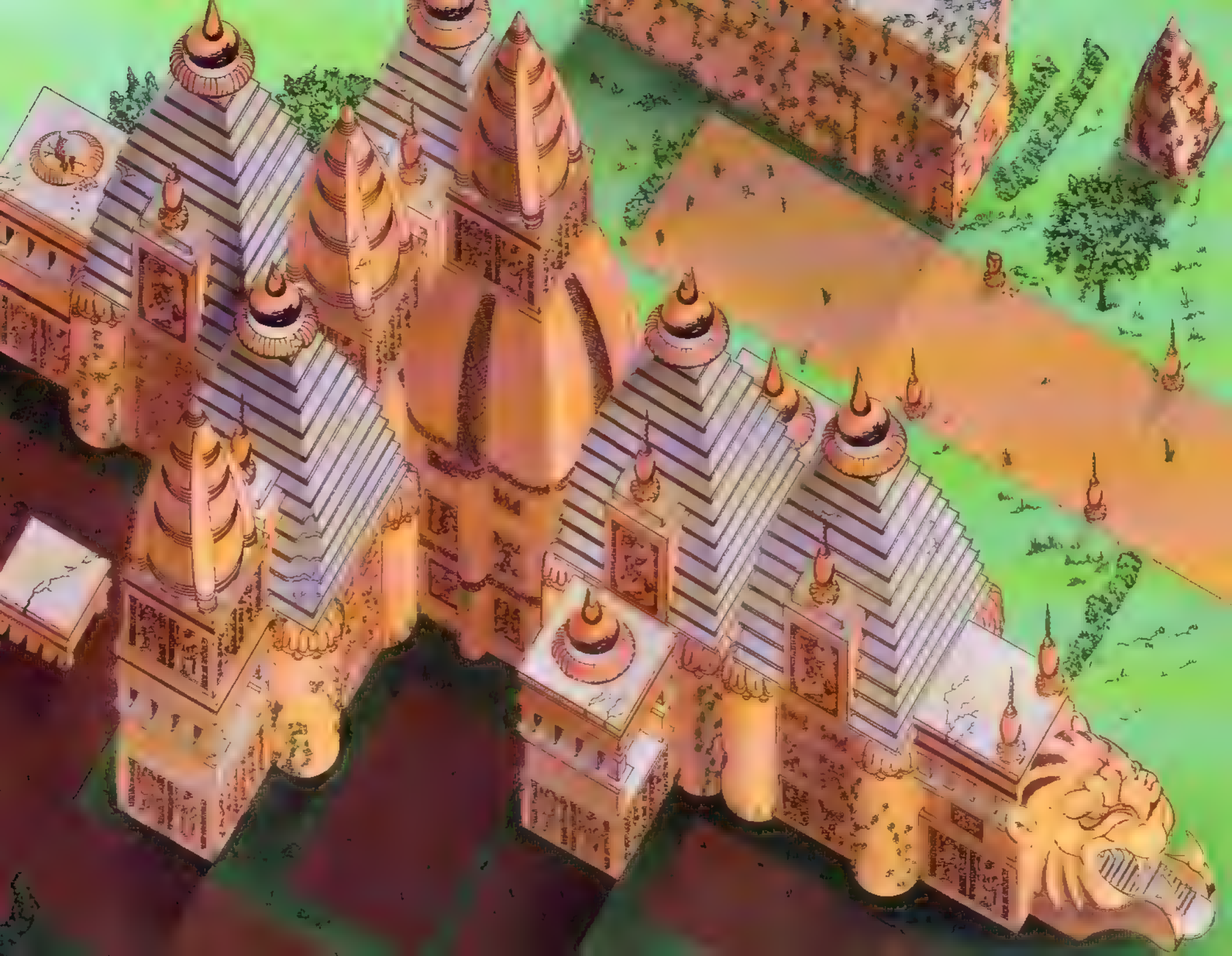
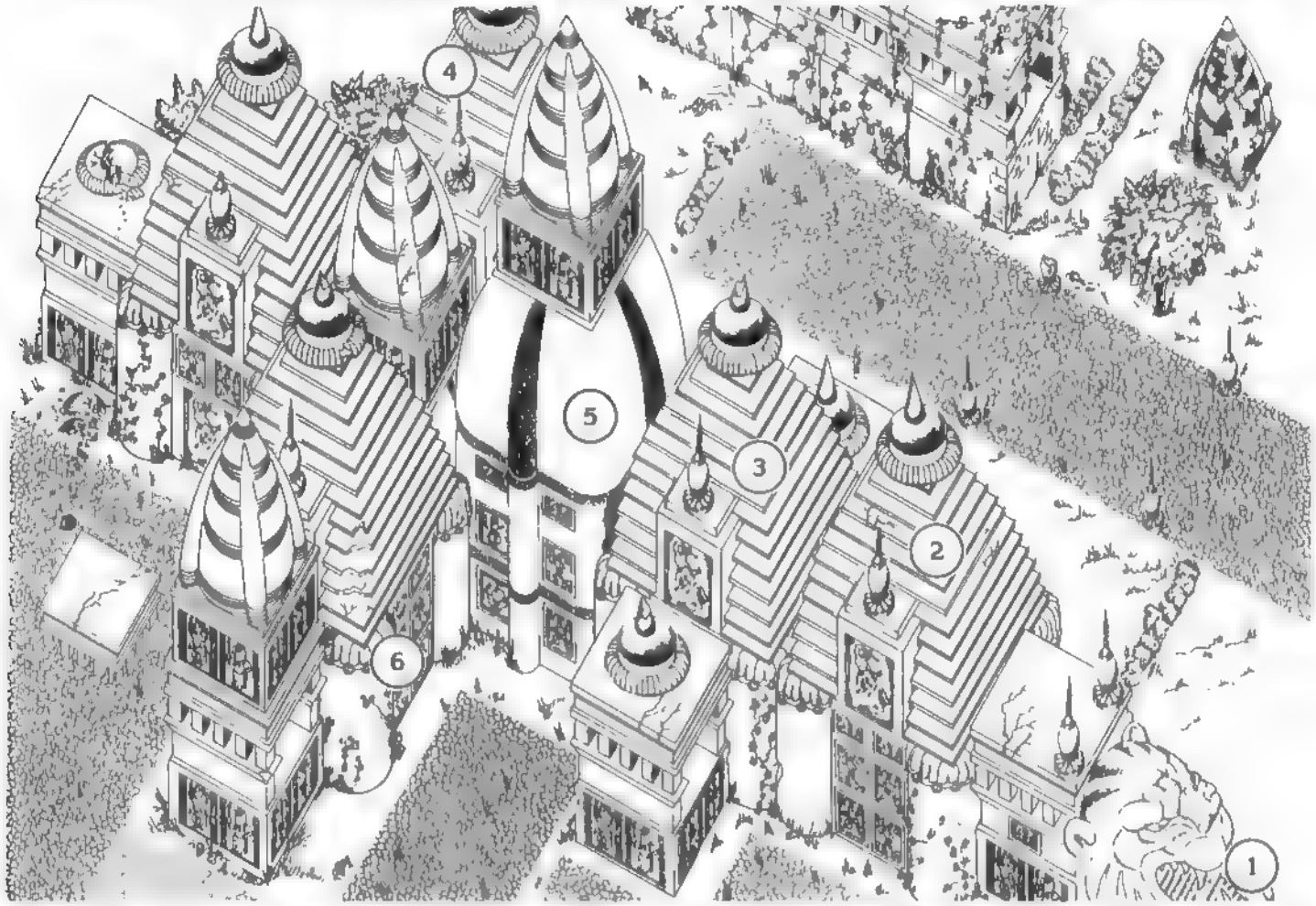


ARIJANI'S TEMPLE



This temple lies on the slopes of Mt. Yamati in the desert domain of Sri Raji. It is secretly run by the rakshasa lord Arijani. Illusions fill the interior, and almost nothing is as it seems. Arijani has perverted the beliefs of his people to suit his own sinister ends. Each section of the temple is devoted a different deity, all of them evil.

1. Entrance: Worshippers enter the temple through these doors. (Priests and other creatures who inhabit this vile place enter elsewhere.) The doorway is carved to form the image of a tiger's gaping mouth. A red carpet, like a flaming tongue, runs down the hallway into the temple.

2. Rudra's Pagoda: Arijani has devoted this area to Rudra, god of storms and disease, and the bringer of death. Intricate wall-reliefs depict storms and people in the throes of death.

3. Shiva's Pagoda: Devoted to Shiva the destroyer. The pagoda is decorated with reliefs depicting many forms of destruction.

4. Kali's Pagoda: Devoted to Kali, the black earth mother who devours her own children. The reliefs in this area show Kali as the goddess of wickedness.

5. Ravana's Pagoda: Devoted to Ravana, a monster king of the rakshasa. Ravana normally wields far less power than the other lords who are worshipped in this temple. Arijani has honored him with the central pagoda, and made him the most powerful deity of all, master of evil. The wall decorations depict all manner of evil and wickedness.

6. Yama's Pagoda: Devoted to Yama, lord and judge of the dead. Yama normally is not considered and evil manifestation, but Arijani has twisted Yama's role so that the people believe him to be the evil god of all undead. This pagoda is adorned with reliefs of all kinds of dead and undead creatures.

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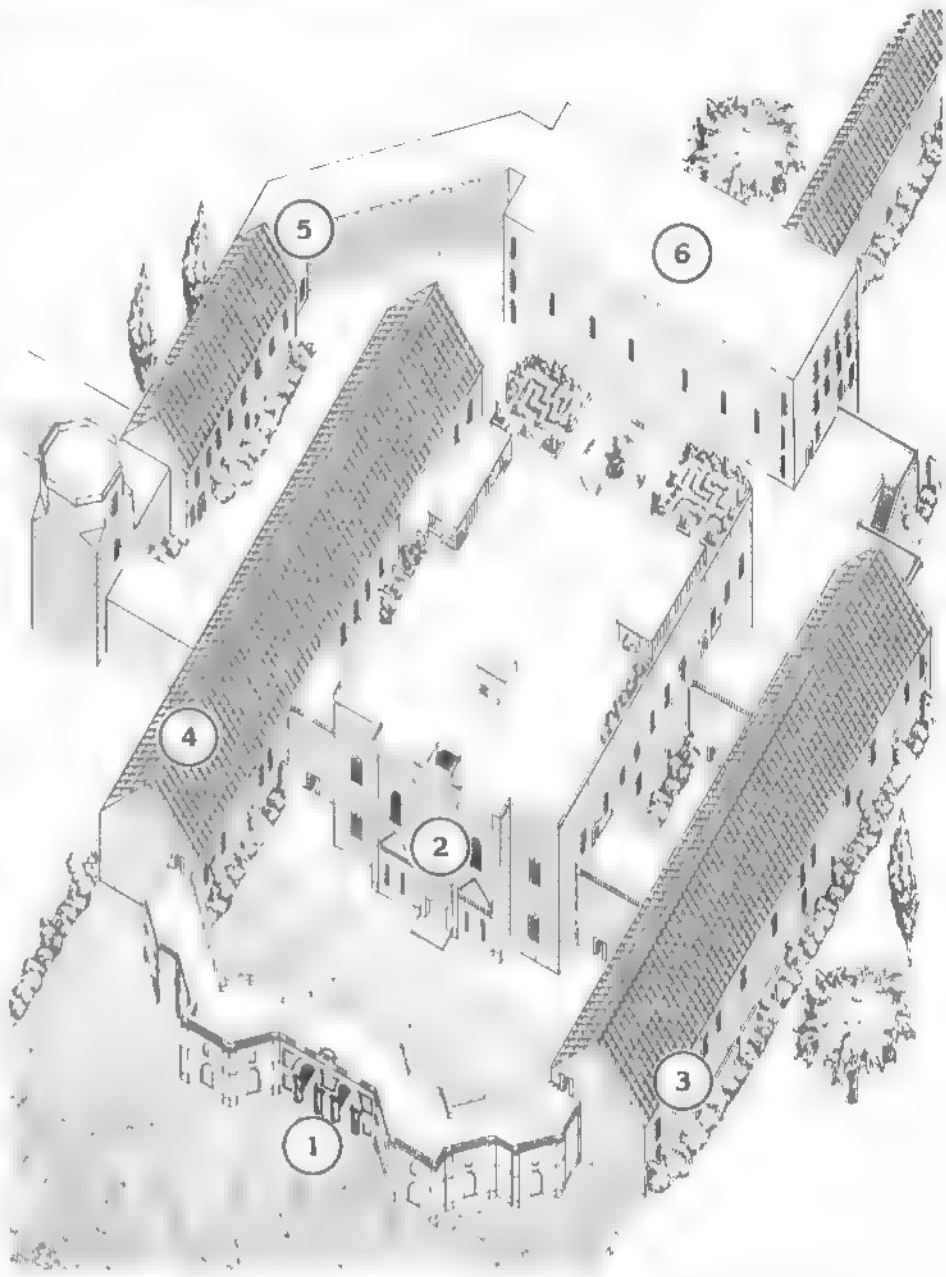
DILISNYA ESTATE

This estate—home of Ivan Dilisnya, lord of Dementlieu—is rambling and enormous. Like an angular maelstrom, it contains branches within branches, all surrounding a single structure at the center. Ivan moves from wing to wing, changing rooms with the season, maintaining only the quarters which are currently in use.

Ivan has a black heart and a brown thumb. The gardens are a tangled wonderland of exotic plants, most of them dead, many of them poisonous. The servants attempt to keep the grounds in order, but only the kitchen and cutting gardens are thriving.



1. Front Gate: A pair of arched, wrought iron gates mark the main entrance to the estate. This is by no means the only access.

2. Laughing House: Ivan devotes this building to "fun." Its twisting, mirrored ballrooms boast ceilings nearly 40 feet high. The building also houses banquet halls, display rooms, toy rooms, theaters, and other dens of iniquity and entertainment. More than a few of Ivan's guests literally have died laughing at his estate—the result, no doubt, of overindulgence.

3. Servants' Wing: The servants, of which there are many, live and work in this wing. The long structure includes their living quarters, as well as kitchens, laundries, and pantries.

4. Family Wing: Ivan and members of his immediate family often live here. It is an enormous structure for so few people. Each person has a suite of rooms, and each room has its own function—be it dressing, undressing, sleeping, bathing, lounging, reading, or entertaining special guests.

5. Garrison: This narrow arm of the estate houses guests and men-at-arms. The half below the elbowlike bend contains guest quarters. The upper half contains the simple quarters of Ivan's henchmen. A vast, empty vestibule in the crook of the elbow separates the two sections.

6. Ivan's Playroom: Only Ivan Dilisnya is allowed to enter this building, unless he extends an invitation. Such invitations are no honor. Guests who are brought here may never be seen again. None of them will die laughing.

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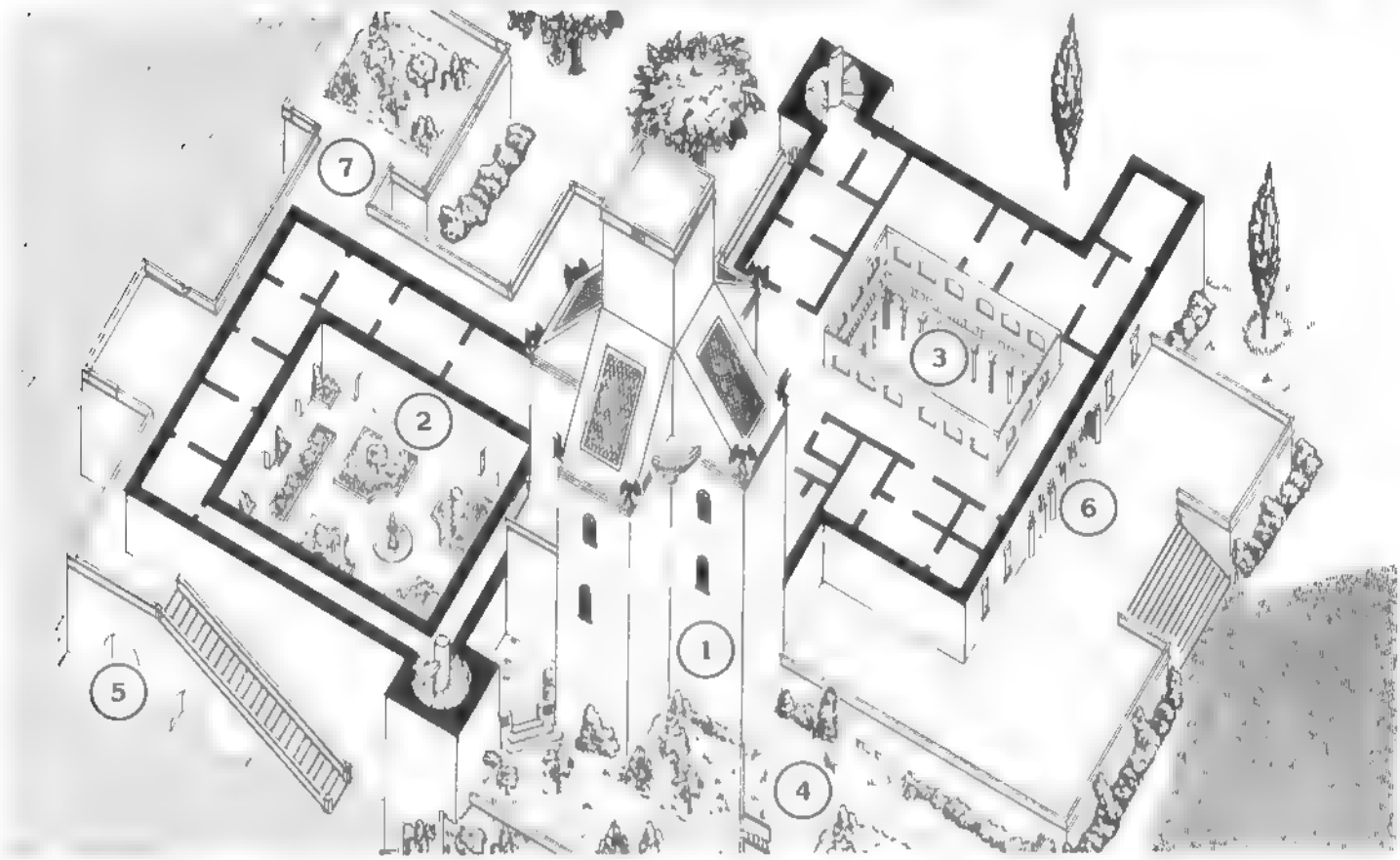
HAZLIK'S ESTATE



The wizard Hazlik, lord and ruler of the domain Hazlan, resides in this palace. The small city of Toyalis lies a few miles south.

1. The Red Tower: Hazlik's personal chambers and laboratories are here. At night, red and orange flames flicker gently in the large, sloping windows on the uppermost floor. Many balconies circle the tower, and a railed walk offers a vantage from the top.

2. Guesting Wing: Guests (and fools) who stay for any length of time sleep in this wing. It features a central courtyard with an impressive formal garden. The view shown here excludes the roof to offer a glimpse of the interior. Only major walls and those obvious to guests have been illustrated.

3. Hall of Triumphs: On the first floor, Hazlik displays trophies and other gruesome portrayals of his accomplishments. The roof of the building is not shown to reveal the interior of the upper floor.

4. Main Gardens: The gardens cascade down a terraced slope. Flowers provide accents, but most of the grounds are planted with trees, sculpted shrubs, and tangled greenery. Twisting paths meander through the garden, with many stone benches for a wanderer's respite. Servants and grounds-keepers strongly warn guests not to pluck or otherwise harm any flora, and advise them to visit it only during daylight, lest they lose their way.

5. Scullery: Levels beneath the guesting wing hold the servants' areas and storage rooms.

6. Main Entrance: Anyone who visits the estate must pass this way. The broad stone steps ascend to a vast, railed porch. The pillared entrance beyond leads into the grand courtyard outside the Hall of Triumphs, with no apparent obstacles.

7. House of Solitude: Few people other than Hazlik venture into this wing. At times, strange, muffled sounds echo throughout the structure. At night, flickering lights move from window to window.

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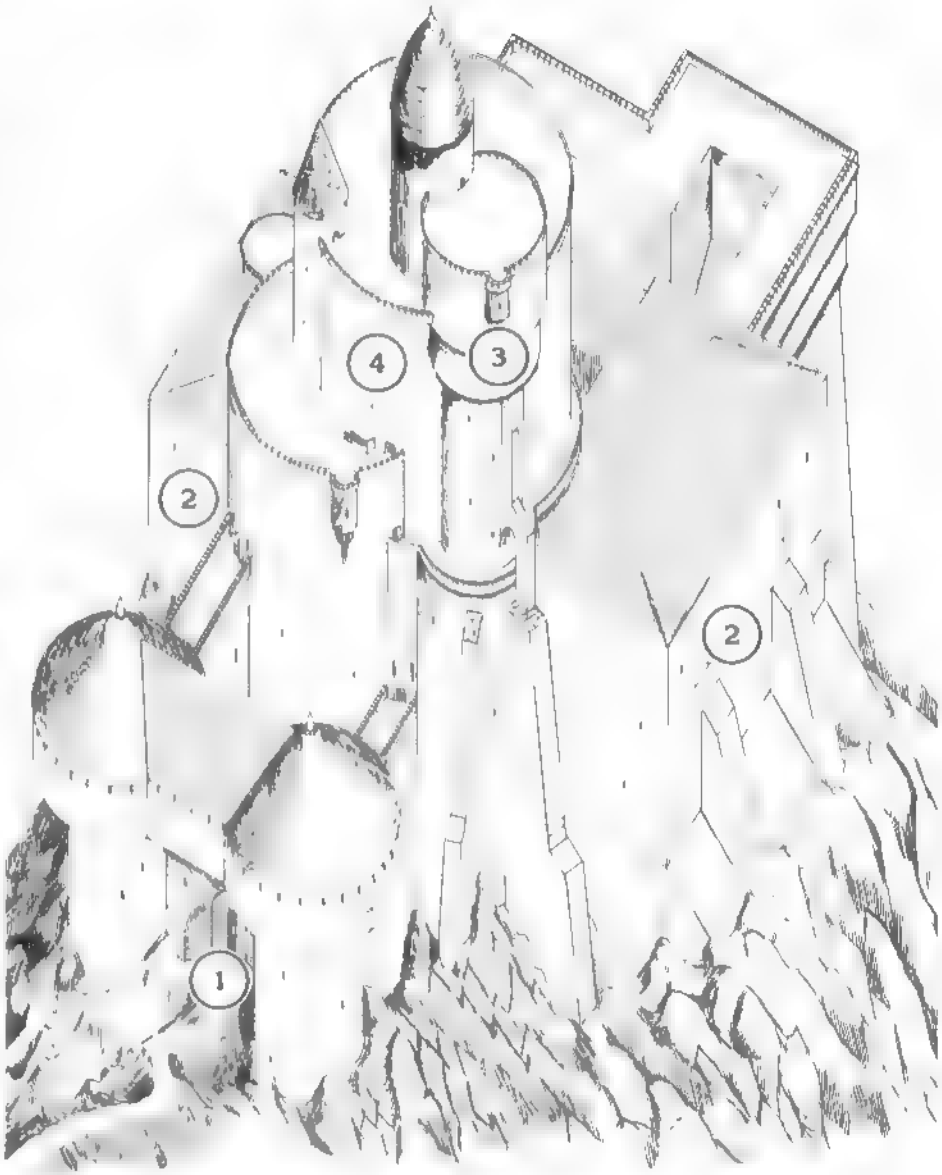
AZALIN'S CASTLE

Azalin is the lord of Darkon. His castle crowns a hill of broken rock, a few miles south of Il Aluk. The massive structure appears even more solid than the rock below it. The natives of Darkon believe this castle is the gateway to a dark abyss, and in a sense, they are right. Azalin's laboratories lie deep underground, beneath the maze of dungeons.

The castle's name, (pronounced "a *vair* nus") stems from a peculiar phenomenon. Few birds (*avis*) fly over the fortress. Only scavengers such as crows can soar freely in the winds above. Other birds who grace these skies soon plunge to the earth and die.



1. Entrance: The people of Il Aluk call this gateway The Maw. It is the only visible entrance to the castle. Locals believe that secret tunnels lead to the depths below the fortress, but no one is eager to explore them.

2. The Blocks: Set upon a stone plinth, these twin buildings illustrate why the castle has little need of an outer wall. The Blocks are so thick and imposing that no other defense is required.

3. Hanging Tower: The "Hanging Tower" hangs from the side of the central keep. The tower takes its name from one of Azalin's dark practices, however. Executed prisoners hang from the edge of the tower for all to see. After several days, the rope is cut. The body plummets to the rocks at the base of the castle,.where its skeleton is picked clean by scavengers. Natives call the buttressed area below the tower "The Bone Heap."

4. Main Keep: Several wide, circular towers comprise the keep. The heart of the castle, this structure is a maze of narrow, winding tunnels and huge, vaulted rooms. Secret doors and passageways provide the only access to many levels.

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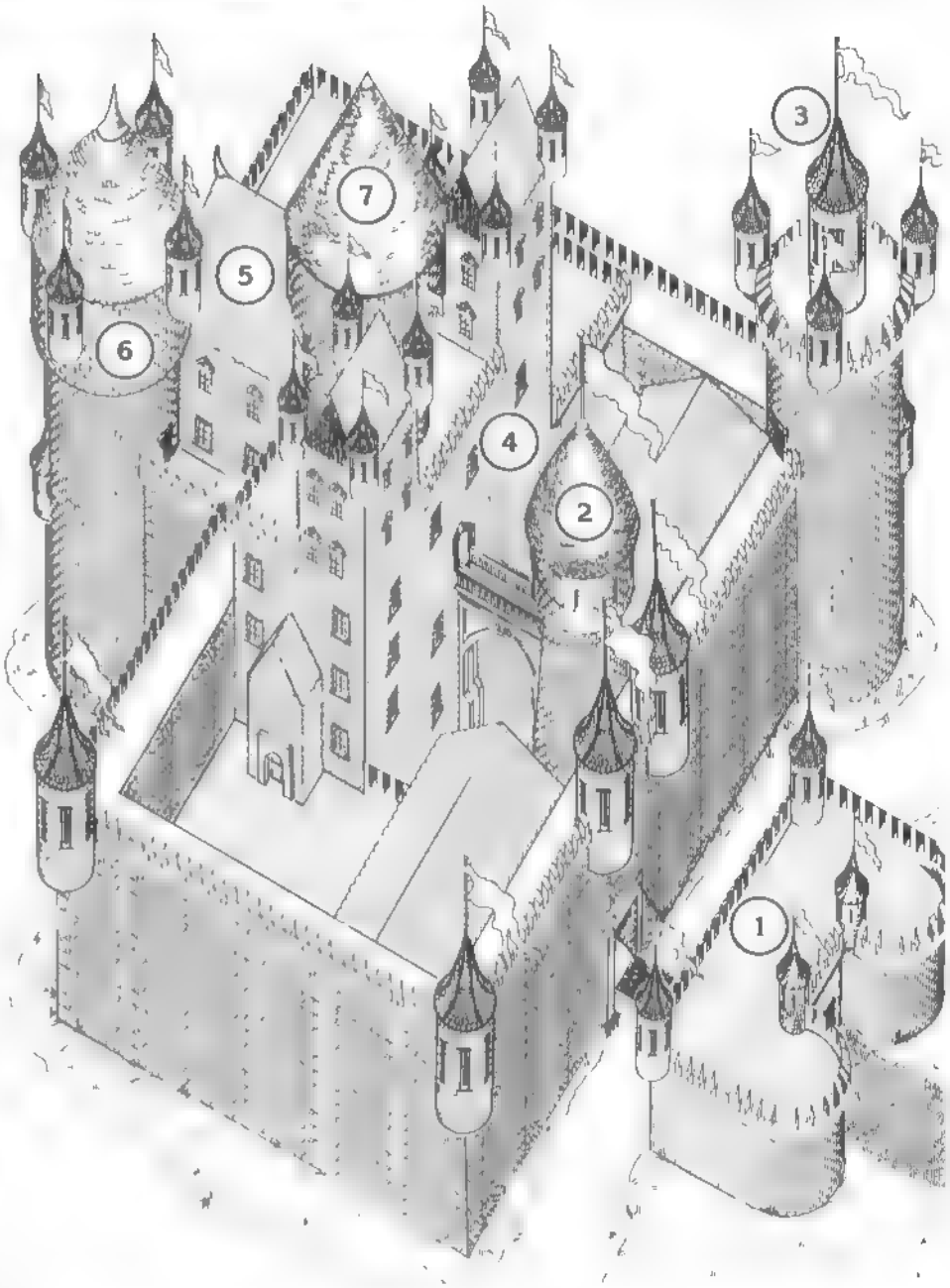
HIREGAARD'S CASTLE

Faerhaaven is the home of Sir Hiregaard, an esteemed nobleman. His alter ego, the hideous Malken, is lord of Nova Vaasa. The castle lies on the broad, grassy plain north of the city Kantora. Pennants and gaily colored flags fly from the towers. At night, when stirred by a gentle breeze, the long pennants reach out like ghostly arms, grasping at phantoms in the moonlight.



1. Barbican: All visitors must pass through the barbican to gain entrance to the castle. The guards usually hoist the gate at cock's crow, and let it descend with the setting of the sun.

2. Tower of Isolation: The sole access to this tower is a walkway suspended high above the courtyard. The walkway links the tower to the main keep. Political prisoners are detained in the uppermost rooms of the rounded tower.

3. Guardsmen's Tower: Men-at-arms are quartered here. No other tower joins the square castle wall. (The structures on the three remaining corners are hanging turrets.)

4. Main Keep: The keep includes ballrooms, grand dining halls, trophy rooms, receiving rooms, and more. The square towers overlooking the yard are guest houses. They open onto the roof, which is planted with a garden for leisurely strolls.

5. Royal Suite: The upper floors of this wing contain the private quarters of Sir Hiregaard's family. The wing adjoins the main keep and the master's tower.

6. Master's Tower: The wide, upper portion of this tower houses Hiregaard's personal chambers. Even family members are forbidden to enter these rooms. Those who are curious enough to climb the stairs are greeted by a locked door.

7. The Central Tower: This tower soars higher than any other in Faerhaaven, its turret nearly piercing the clouds. Some of the servants believe it is haunted.

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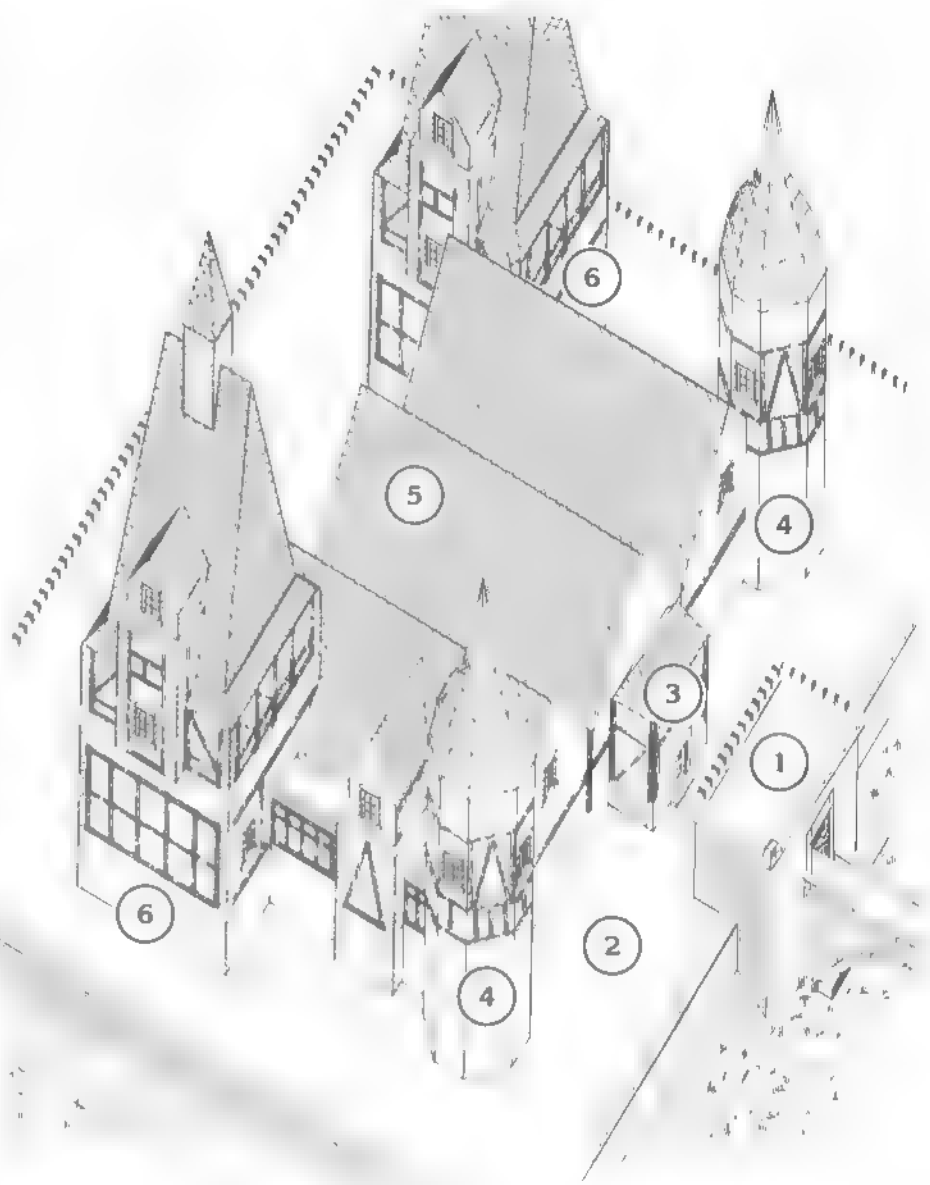
MIRCEA'S CASTLE

Guirgui is the residence of Ladislav Mircea, lord of Sanguinia. Only a low wall and dry moat surround the castle. No towers or fortifications defend it from assault, but the vampire Mircea has little to fear. Only peasants or townsfolk could storm his abode, and most would tremble at the prospect.

An extensive web of dungeons, vaults, and tunnels lies below the castle. Some of these tunnels lead to secret exits far from the castle walls.



1. Gatehouse: A stone bridge spans the dry moat, ending at the foot of this small, square gatehouse. Inside the structure, elaborate wrought iron gates align with the castle wall. The hinges have begun to rust, and the gate shrieks and groans as it swings reluctantly upon them.

2. Walkway: A broad, paved walkway circles the entire building. No gardens, benches, or other objects obstruct the area. Weeds grow between the stones, but most of them have become limp and yellow in the cold Sanguinian nights.

3. Main Entrance: Directly across from the gatehouse, this entrance leads to a large hall. Other entrances lie at the rear of the castle.

4. Guarded Turrets: These small towerlike structures originally served as prisons for genteel captives. Only one door links each tower to the rest of the castle. The tower windows are too high or too small for easy escape.

5. Main Hall: This hall contains major receiving rooms, such as banquet halls, audience chambers, ballrooms, and parlors. The rear of the hall contains the kitchens, laundries, and other service rooms.

6. Residence Wings: Ladislav rests in a coffin buried deep in the dungeons, so these rooms are mostly empty. The few visitors he receives stay in this wing while they live.

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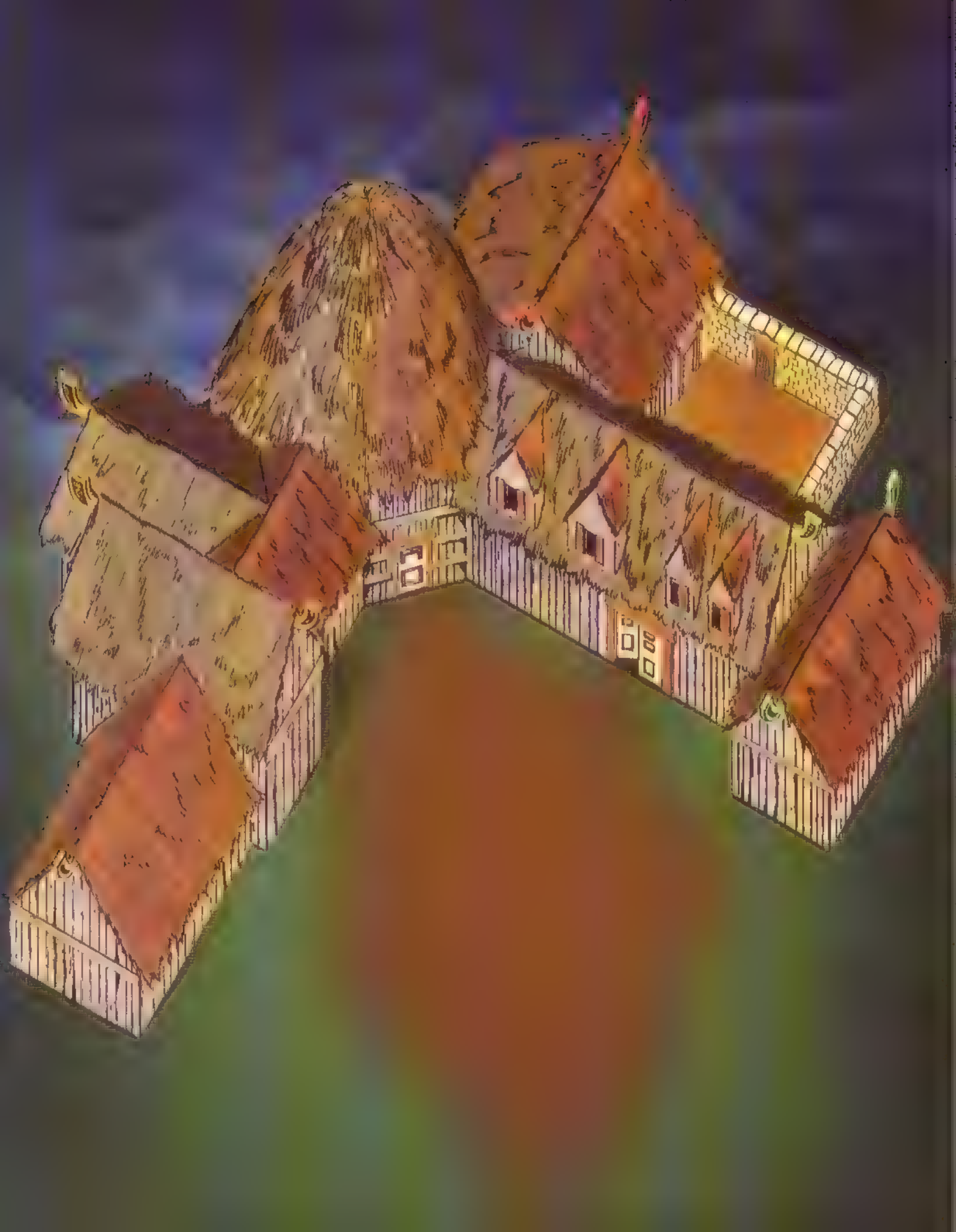
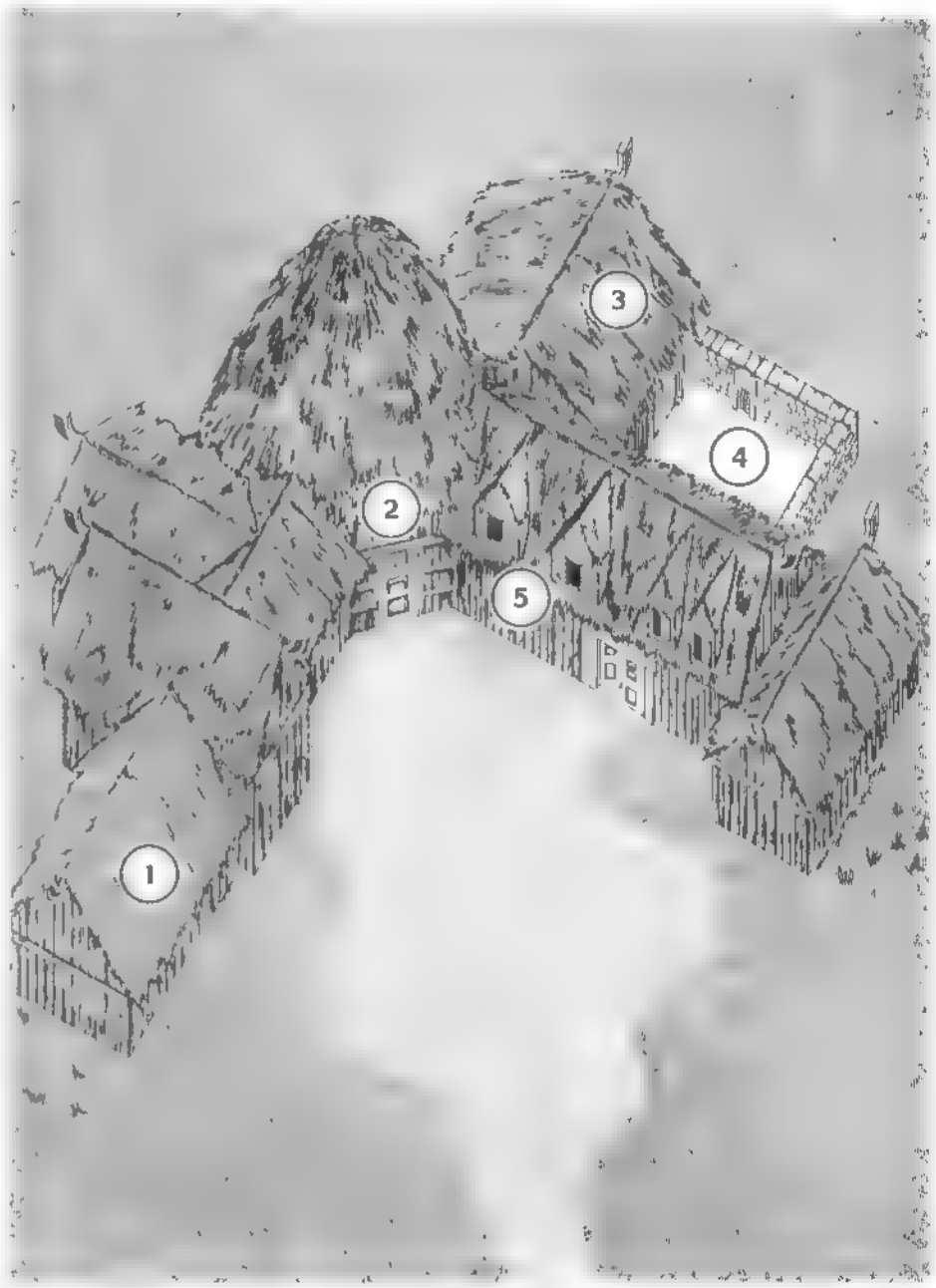


MARKOV ESTATE

Frantisek Markov, lord of Markovia, lives and works in this primitive building. It lies in a lonely, windswept valley of the Balinok Mountains. The estate is large, but its construction is crude, the decor simple and austere. The timbers are solid and join tightly, however, and they stand firm against the winter winds. The roof is densely thatched, inelegant but waterproof.

Markov cares little for human luxuries. Although this estate is his principal workplace and residence, he often sleeps in small huts in the surrounding hills. Visitors to the estate are allowed to bed down in a small guest shack near the main house.



1. Servants' Wing: All of Markov's household servants are simple-minded beast men. Few of them survive more than a year or two beyond their creation. The beast men sleep on straw mattresses in the loft of this wing. Service rooms, such as the kitchen and pantry, lie between the sleeping quarters and Markov's laboratory.

2. Laboratory: A rustic foyer lies beyond the front door, but Markov performs his surgeries in the room behind it. In the valley, wild animals sometimes prick their ears at the terrified screeching of a fellow creature in this room. The screeching eventually gives way to cries that are almost human. The laboratory is joined directly to the zoological garden.

3. Zoological Garden: Markov presents himself as a zoologist to visitors. He keeps a menagerie of wild animals here, most of them dangerous, some of them exotic. Most of the animals are caged.

4. Courtyard: Animals that are not dangerous or capable of fleeing are permitted to walk in the courtyard. A hallway joins the yard to the double doors at the front of the Master's Wing.

5. Master's Wing: Frantisek sometimes sleeps in a humble room in this wing. More often, he sleeps in his lab, or not at all. His laboratory is more important to him than his own living quarters, and it shows.

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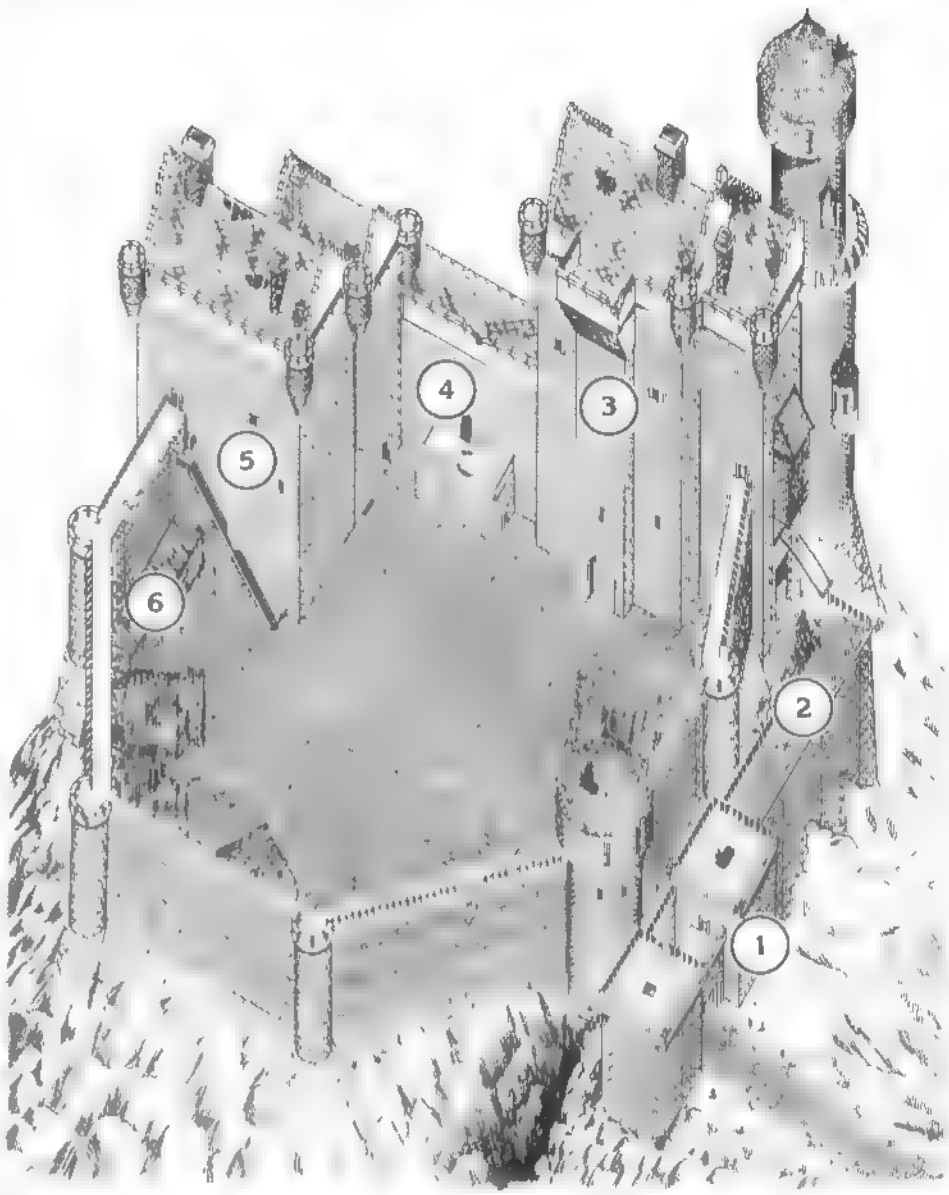
CASTLE OF FORLORN

Tristenoira" is the name peasants give this castle high in the mountains of Forlorn. The name comes from an old dialect, and means "eve of sorrow." The natives believe the castle is abandoned, and claim it is haunted. Indeed, the ghost-lord of Forlorn is imprisoned within its walls.

The castle is perched on a precipice. At night, wanderers who pass below can hear anguished moans echoing from the stony structure. Tiny lights sometimes drift along the top of the outer wall, as if watchmen were pacing with candles.

The castle is ancient. The mortar crumbles between the weathered stones, and in places the walls have begun to fall. Stonework that has slipped from the rooftops lies shattered on the ground.



1. Barbican: The sole road to the castle leads to this gatehouse. It is the only safe approach to the castle, and the only reasonable way to enter it.

2. Approach: A traveler who enters the barbican must walk along this approach to reach the main gate. The castle walls and towers watch over the approach.

3. Lord's Tower: This large structure once housed the lord of the castle, his family, and a loyal retainer.

4. Grand Hall: The hall links the guest tower and the lord's tower. In livelier times, meals, meetings, and court trials all would have been held here.

5. Guest Tower: Visitors and guests once received rooms in this tower. At night, only the door that opened onto the stairs above the courtyard remained unlocked. Inside, no visible doors linked the tower to the rest of the castle. This protected the lord from unexpected visitations. Guests with unfriendly motives had to leave their quarters and cross the open courtyard to assault the lord's tower.

6. Tunnel: An inner passage runs the length of the outer wall. In places, the tunnel branches, leading to small, dead-end chambers where castle guards could trap and assault unwary invaders. The main passage leads to only a few exits into the courtyard and the castle itself.

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MORDENHEIM'S ESTATE

Dr. Victor Mordenheim, mad scientist of Lamordia, resides in this modest castle. It is poised on the edge of a cliff, overlooking the Sea of Sorrows. Waves crash against the rocks below, roaring on impact. The cliffs are riddled with caves. At high tide, many of the entrances are submerged.

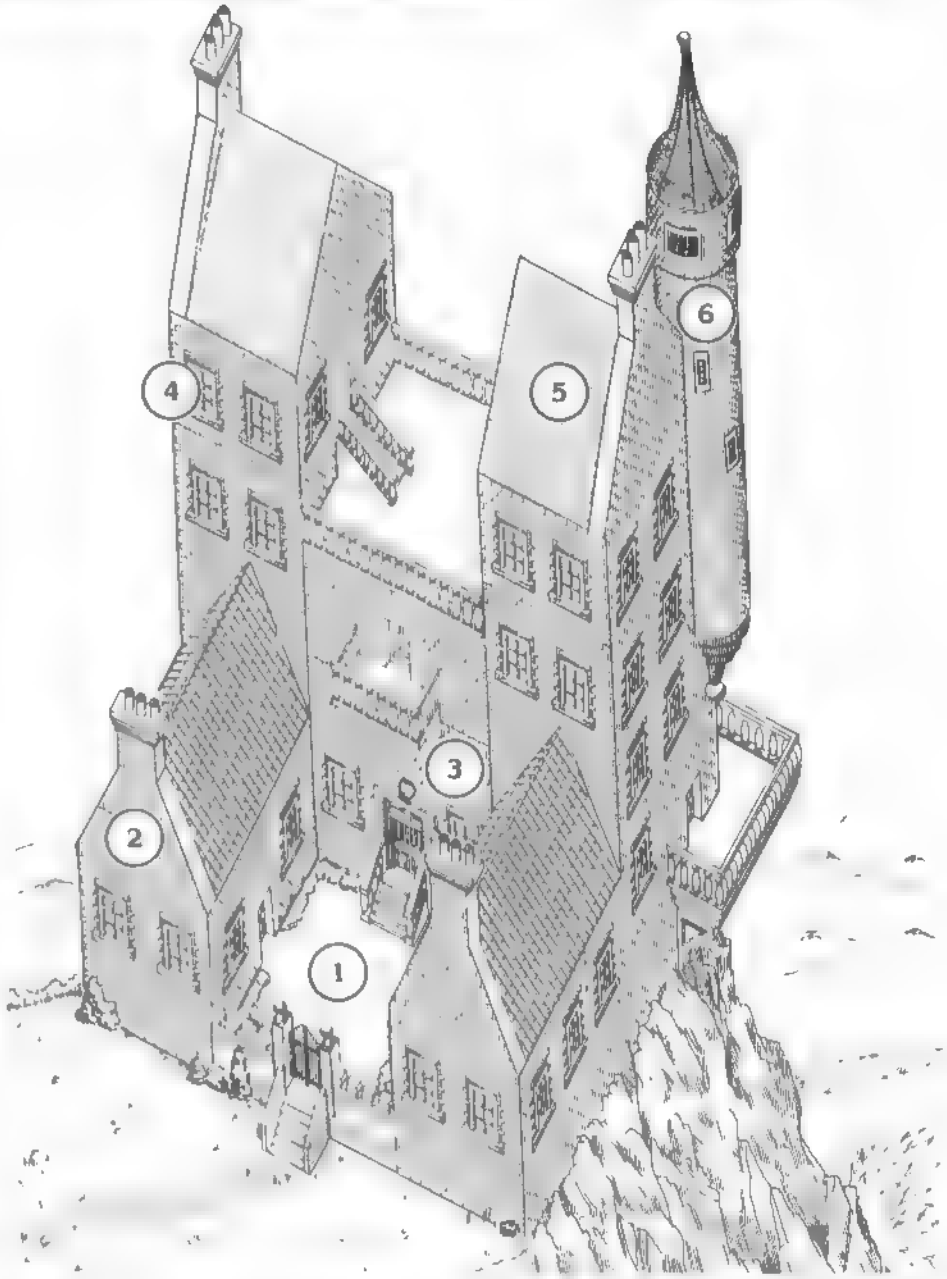
1. Courtyard: The courtyard admits visitors to the castle, cradling them between a pair of gloomy wings. A small fountain lies in the center of the courtyard. The base of the fountain is filled with brackish water and decaying leaves. A sturdy iron gate at the entrance to the courtyard seals the castle from the outside world.

2. Visitor's Wing: Mordenheim seldom welcomes overnight guests, but those who are stranded here may sleep in this wing. The doctor has difficulty retaining servants. All the amenities are available, but Mordenheim has allowed the decor and furnishings to deteriorate. Musty linens, layers of dust, and dry, leafless plants in the rooms testify to his own poor housekeeping.

3. Great Hall: This building contains all the large service rooms, such as the dining hall and library.

4. Personal Quarters: Dr. Mordenheim and his wife reside these quarters. His wife, or what remains of her, scarcely lives. Mordenheim maintains her unconscious body.

5. Laboratory: The doctor conducts his experiments here, stretching the limits of medical science and breaching the bounds of human decency.



6. Watch Tower: Originally this tower was designed as a lookout. The uppermost floor of the structure lies 93 feet above ground level and 200 feet above the Sea of Sorrows. Its windows offer a dramatic view, particularly when storms move in from the sea. A circular stair follows the inner wall of the tower, opening onto sunlit landings and passing the small, heavy doors of cubby-hole rooms. Dr. Mordenheim uses the rooms to stow away that for which he has no immediate use—including living specimens.

"Schloss Mordenheim"

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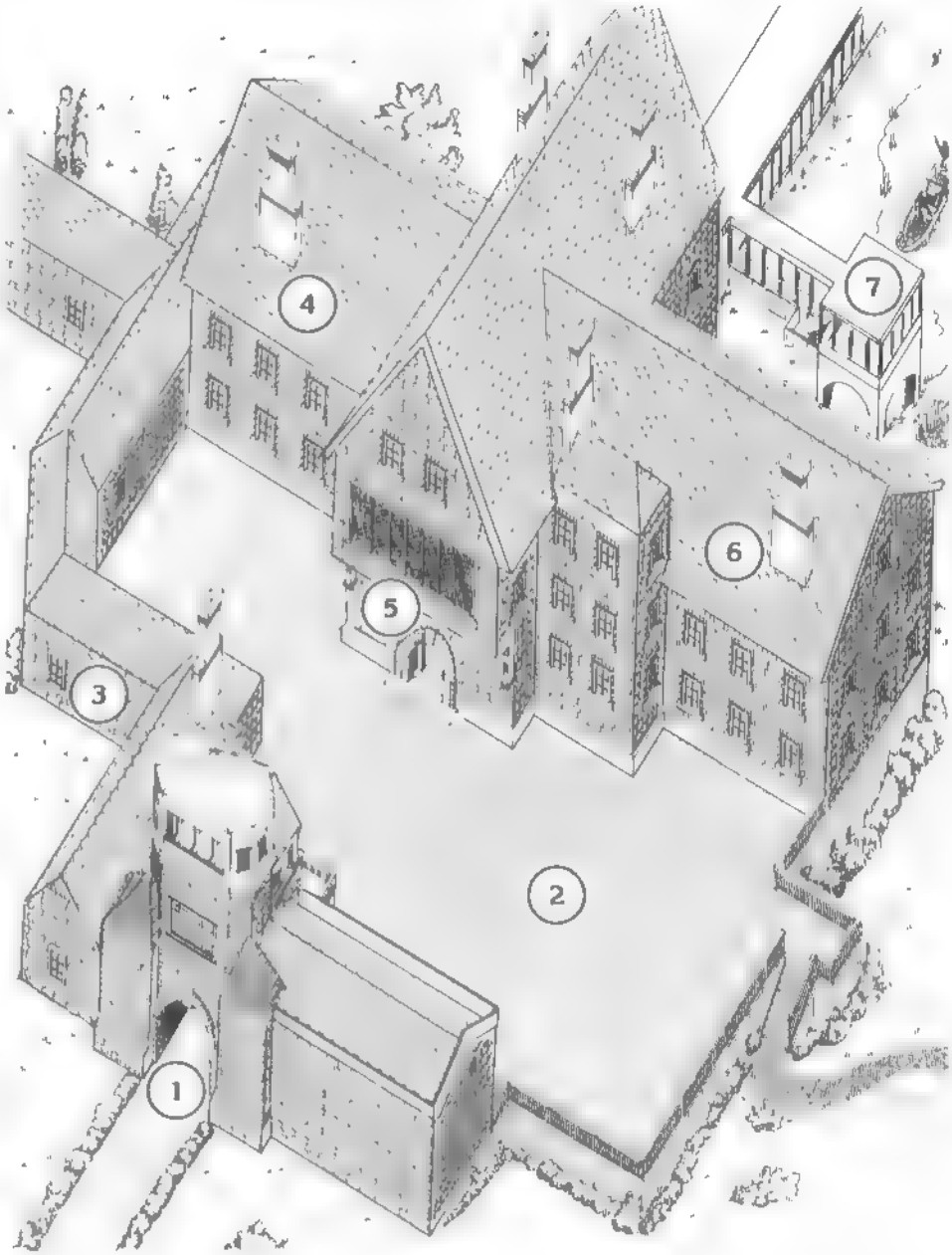
RENIER ESTATE

Delanuit is the ancestral home of the Reniers of Richemulot. Jacqueline Renier, lord of Richemulot, is the current mistress of this estate. Its name (pronounced "day-la- *nwee*") means "from the darkness" in the local tongue. The estate lies in the city of Pont-a-Museau, on an isle in the River Musarde.



1. Front Gate: The dramatic arch guides visitors into the main courtyard. Horses are stabled in the right wing of the gatehouse. Living quarters for a groom or butler lie above the stalls. The rooms are often empty.

2. Main Courtyard: The vast, open courtyard is overgrown and ill tended. A curving maze of crude dirt paths links the buildings, but some of the walkways are cobblestone. At night, from within this courtyard, the walls of the estate seem to swell; they become massive, black, and looming.

3. Servants' Quarters: The few servants of the Renier family dwell in this section of the rambling estate.

4. East Wing: Guests and visitors are invited to bed down in this wing. When not occupied, the rooms are cloaked in dust.

5. Big House: Contains the great hall, library, trophy room, and receiving rooms. The kitchen and larder are at the rear. There are no personal chambers. The Reniers pass many pleasant hours in this building—pleasant, at least, for them.

6. West Wing: Holds the family's personal chambers. Visitors are unwelcome here unless a Renier has extended a special invitation.

7. Gazebo/Landing: Stands over a dark stream which flows into the River Arden. Small boats tie up below, carrying passengers to and from the estate. A corridor links the gazebo to the big house. Similar corridors lead to other parts of the estate, which are not pictured.

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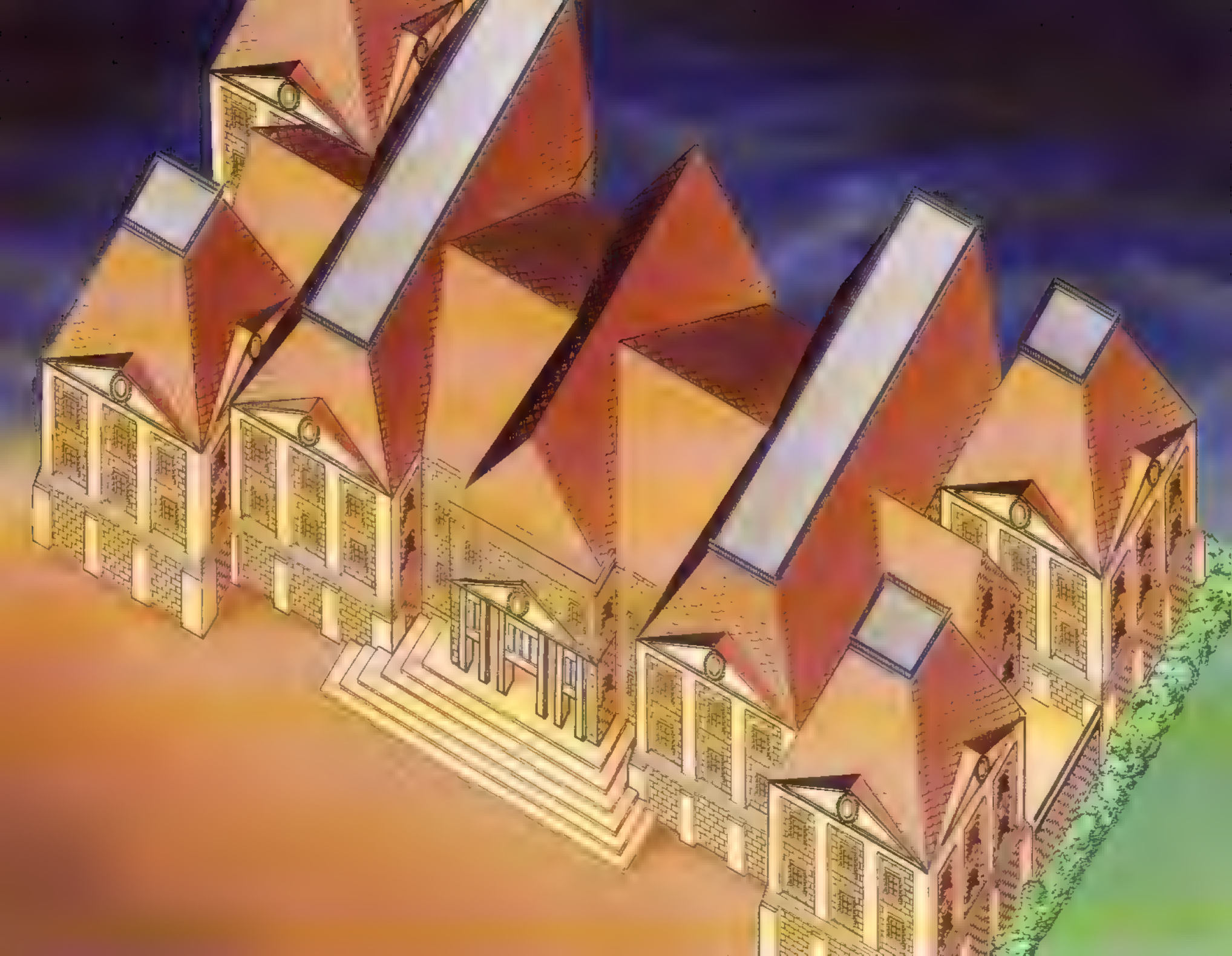
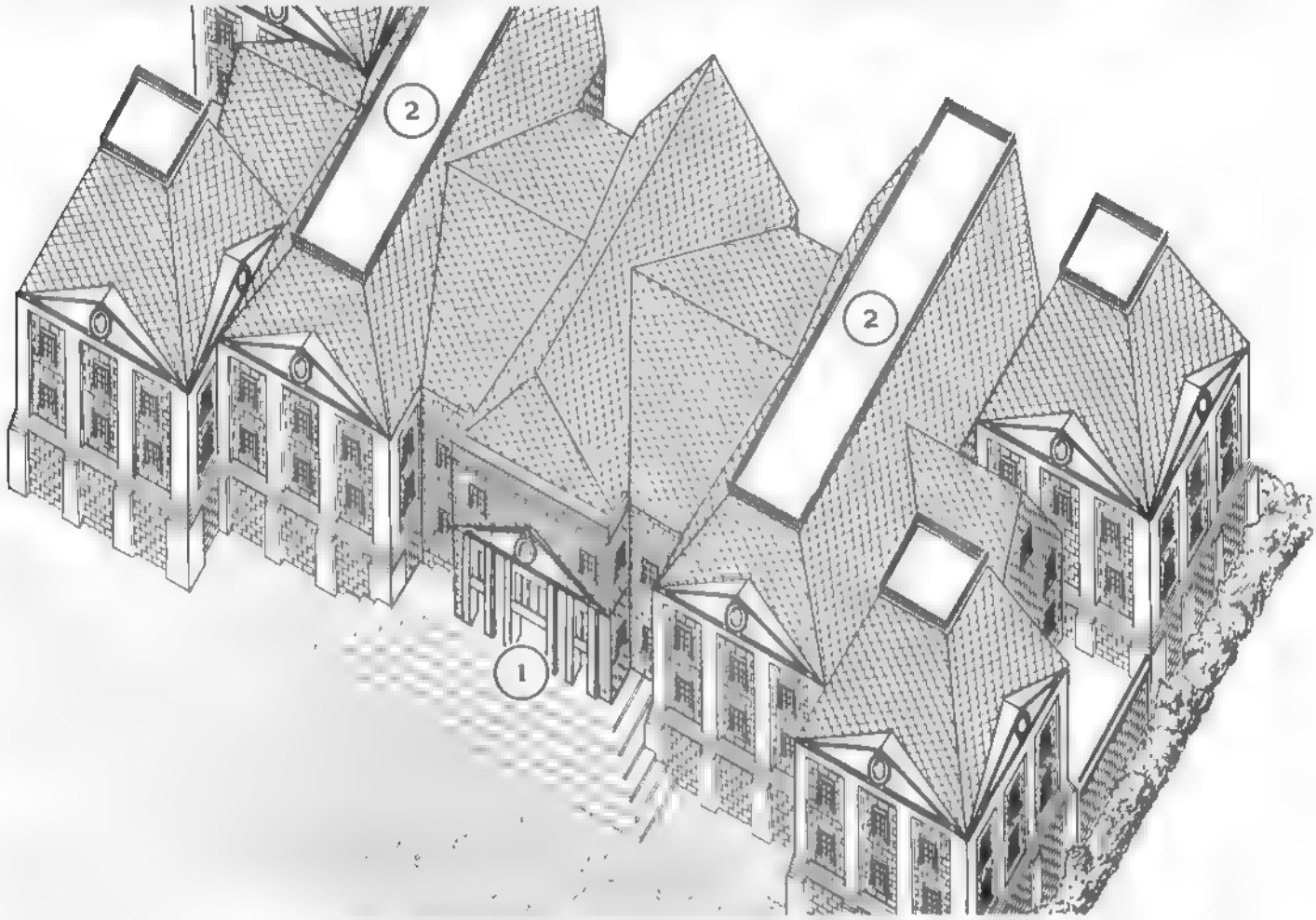


BORITSI ESTATE



Ivana Boritsi—poisoner, temptress, and lord of Borca—resides in this estate. It is located southeast of Levkarest, near the hot springs at the base of the Ballnoks. Loosely translated, Misericordia means "loving kindness." Borcans secretly call the place *Miseria Corpa*, or "body of misery."

Nothing within this huge block of a building is simple or plain. Secret doors and narrow, hidden passageways are common in the Boritsi estate. According to rumor, Ivana's private suite is accessible only through a series of secret corridors.

High, vaulted ceilings and sweeping arches fill the interior. The floors are polished marble or inlaid hardwoods, dressed with elegant carpets. The windows in many rooms are tinted red, emitting little sunlight. Elaborate wooden carvings decorate the doorways and balconies. The furniture is massive and ornate. Gilded mirrors and heavy, faded tapestries hang on the walls. Looming statues fill the galleries.

At times the estate is quite lively. Ivana's distant family frequently visits, and she invites favored nobles to stay, too. The rooms are well lit and a strange gaiety fills the place. At other times, Ivana evicts most of her guests and sends servants scurrying into the shadows. The estate becomes somber and hollow.

1. Main Entrance: Decorative columns flank this dramatic entrance, which dwarfs visitors. The cool marble of the foyer lends a chill to the air.

2. Widow's Walks: Ivana has been widowed many times. A widow's walk traditionally takes its name from sailors' wives who await their husband's return from the sea. Ivana often mounts a vigil here when a husband or "loved one" dies, haunting the walk for up to three days. The staff tries to ignore the maniacal laughter that punctuates her wails. Trap doors lead to the roof.

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VLAD DRAKOV'S CASTLE

This imposing castle belongs to Drakov, lord of Falkovnia. The palace dominates a small, craggy island near Lekar, in the middle of the Vuchar River. Sewage from the castle spills into the water. Narrow drain tunnels at the base of the rock carry the faint, anguished cries of prisoners, who are trapped in the castle's dungeons.

1. Towers: Thick and squat, these towers are the first part of the castle that a person on the river bank sees. The towers and the heavy wall that joins them create a formidable impression. Clearly, it would be as difficult to breach this fortress from within as from without.

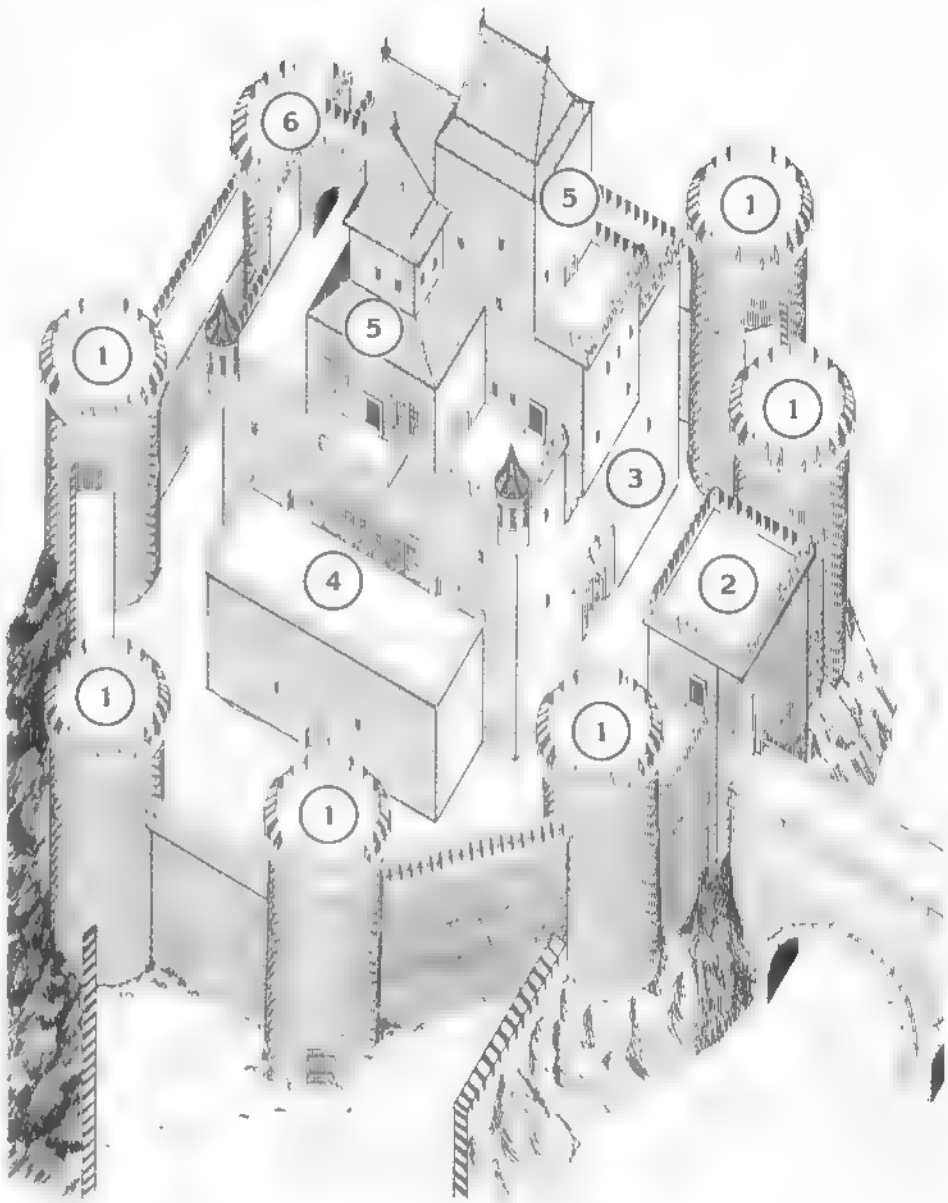
2. Gatehouse: This building creates a gaping maw through which visitors approach the castle. The sharp iron teeth of the portcullis overhead discourage dallying at the gate.

3. Main Keep: The large, common rooms lie in this section of the castle, including the dining hall, trophy rooms, judgement hall, and others.

4. Garrison: A small garrison of hand-picked soldiers occupies this dismal, boxy wing.

5. Vlad's Residence: This wing contains the private quarters of Vlad and his family. In the surrounding lands, wild stories are told of the decadence and opulence in these rooms.

6. Half Tower: Also known as "Vlad's Tower," this structure was designed as a lookout. It is Vlad's favorite haunt. The causeway that links it to his residence was added at his command. From the west bank of the river, Drakov sometimes can be seen upon the tower, surveying his lands.



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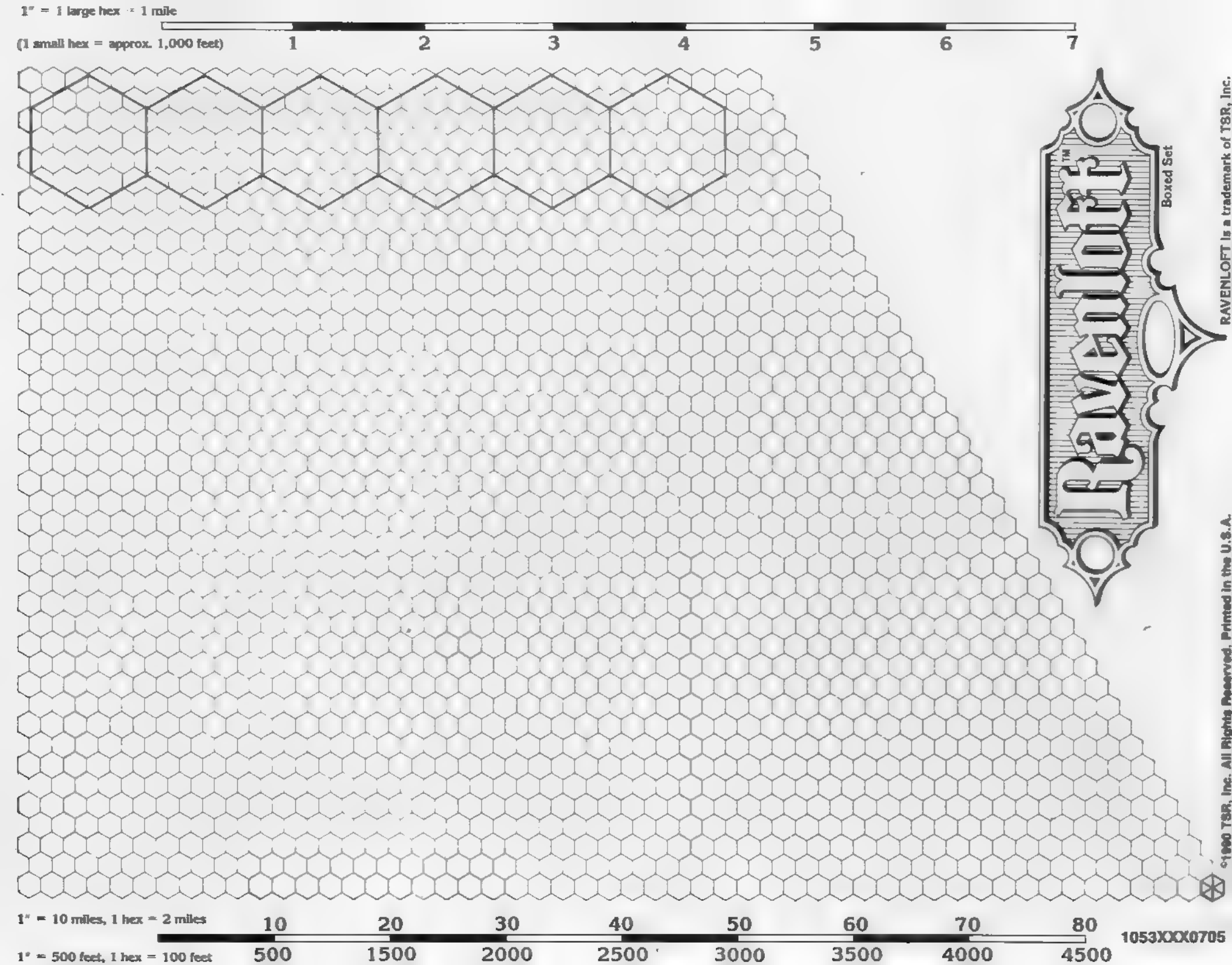
1" = 1 large hex = 1 mile
(1 small hex = approx. 1,000 feet)
1
2
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Boxed Set
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1" = 10 miles, 1 hex = 2 miles
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
1" = 500 feet, 1 hex = 100 feet
500
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1053XXX0705

Ravenloft

Boxed Set

THE LANDS OF THE CORE

SEA OF SORROWS

SEA OF AGONY

THE FINGER

THE SHERIFF'S REACH

LAMORDIA

DARKON

DEMENTLIEU

FALKOUNIA

KEENING

C'HENNA

TEPEST

ARAK

MORDENT

RICHEMULOT

DORVINIA

MARKOVIA

NOUA VAASA

NIGHTMARE LANDS

ARKANDALE

BORCA

VERBREK

INVIDIA

GUNDARAK

BARQUIA

HAZLAN

KARTAKASS

FORLORN

SITHICUS

BLUETSPUR

VALACHAN

KRAI NOK MOUNTAINS

Neblus

Viaki

Il Aluk

Markva Bay

Luchar R.

Rivalis

Avernus

Aubrenker's Castle

Corvia

Corvus R.

Karg

Maykle

Vuchar R.

Nevachar Springs

Lake Korst

Tempe R.

Delagia

Sidnar

Mayvin

Tempe Falls

Nartok

Stangengrad

Dervish

Neuschtenburg

Abandoned Estate

Port a-Lucine

Dilisnya Estate

Lekar

Morfenzi

Zhukar

Mt. Nirka

Mt. Nyid

Mt. Lanjeri

Chateaufaux

Lake Krugvogel

Silbervas

Aerie

Pont-a-Museau

Lechberg

Dilisnya Estate

Markov's Estate

Castle Faerhaaven

Egertus

Kantora

Bergovitsa

Lake Baratok

Monastery

Vor Ziyden

Ilvin

Sturben

Mortigny

Ste. Ronges

Arden R.

Krezk

Borlitsi Estate

Levkarest

Castle Ravenloft

Vallaki

Village of Barovia

Iotis R.

Luna R.

Zeidenburg

Castle Kunadora

The Circle

Karina

Teufelsdorf

Castle Forlorn

Arbora

Hazlik's Estate

Toyalis

Sly Var

Mal Ereek

Nidragaard Keep

Mar Thelen

Skald Inn/Tavern

Harmon

Mt. Grysl

Rebelnik

Rotwold

Castle Pantar

Ungrad

Mt. Makab

N

Scale: 1 inch = 10 miles

0 200 Feet	501 1000	2501 5000	5001 10,000	Road	City (over 10,000 pop.)	Domain Boundary
201 500	1001 2500	5001 7500	Forest	Castle or Estate	Town or Village	River

Ravenloft

ISLANDS OF TERROR

STAUNTON BLUFFS
Castle Stonecrest
Willisford
Willis R.
HAR'AKIR
Muhar
Pharaoh's Rest
Port d'Elhour
Tristepas
Lake Noir
SOURAGNE
UECHOR
Nostru R.
Abdok
Cliffs of Vesanis
SRI RAJI
Muladi
Temple
Lake Veda
VAMASHA MTS.
Pakat
Tvashsti
Paridon
Rhastik R.
ZHERISIA
FARELLE
Kaynis
Mourfa R.
Mortilis
SANGUINIA
Kosova
Lake Argus
Mt. Radu
Castle Guirgiu
Tirgo
Fagarus
N

Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile

200 Feet	501 1000	2501 5000	5001 10,000	Road	City
500	1001 2500	5001 7500	10,000 +	Castle or Estate	Town or Village

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LEKAR in Falkovnia

1 inch = 200 feet

Castle Draccipetri

BOYARS' QUARTER (Upper Class)

Bastion of Iron

MERCHANTS' QUARTER

Docks

Canal

OPEN MARKET

Slaughterhouses

LABORERS' QUARTER

Gate of Justice

76 100 feet	26 150	Alleys	Areas Burned by
101 125	Main Streets	Barren Rocky	Drakov's Militia

PORT-A-LUCINE in Demonviller

Sea of Sorrows

GOVERNMENT QUARTER

Docks

QUARTIER MARCHAND (Merchants' Quarter)

GUILD HALLS

Ruins of Ste. Mere des Larmes

LABORERS' TENEMENTS

Road to Chateaufaux

0 25 feet	51 75
26 50	Fields

SILBERUAS in Falkovnia

1 inch = 500 feet

Summer Palace

Upper City

Road to Lekar

NACHTELIEGEN WOODS

Lower City

76 100 feet	126 150	Shallow water 1 6 fathoms
101 125	151 175	Deep water 7 + fathoms

IL ALUK in Darkon

1 inch = 1000 feet

Road to Mariula Bay

DESPONDIA

North Canal

DESOLATUS

Road to Vilaki

Road to Rivers

South Canal

DECIMUS

76 100 feet	126 150	Forest	Rocky, Lt Forest
101 - 125	151 - 175	Marsh	

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LUDENDORF in Lamordia

1 inch = 500 feet

Road to Rivalis

Outer Ward

Road to Aubrecker's Castle

N

0-25 feet | 51-75 | Barren Rocky
26-50 | 76-00 | Fields

PONT-A-MUSEAU in Richemulot

Renier Estate

N

Bridge

KARG in Darkon

1 inch = 500 feet

Mausoleums

Upper city

Road to Maykle

Graveyard

Lower city

Graveyard

N

0-25 feet | 41-100 | Forest
26-40 | Fields | Marsh

MORDENTSHIRE in Mordent

1 inch = 500 feet

Ruined Chapel

Mayor's Home

Marketplace

Hidden Path

House of Grymoon H.

Graveyard

Mausoleum

Sanitarium

Sea of Sorrows

Heather House

Lost Road

N

0-25 feet | 51-75 | Fields
26-50 | Cliff | Marsh

LEUKAREST in Borca

1 inch = 500 feet

N

651-700 feet | 751-775 | Reservoir
701-750 | 776-800 | Aqueduct

VILLAGE OF BAROVIA in Barovia

Castle B.

Gaps. Camp

Set Pos.

Church

Svalich Woods

Burgomaster's House

N

651-700 feet | 801-1000 | 1501-2000
701-800 | 1001-1500 | Trail

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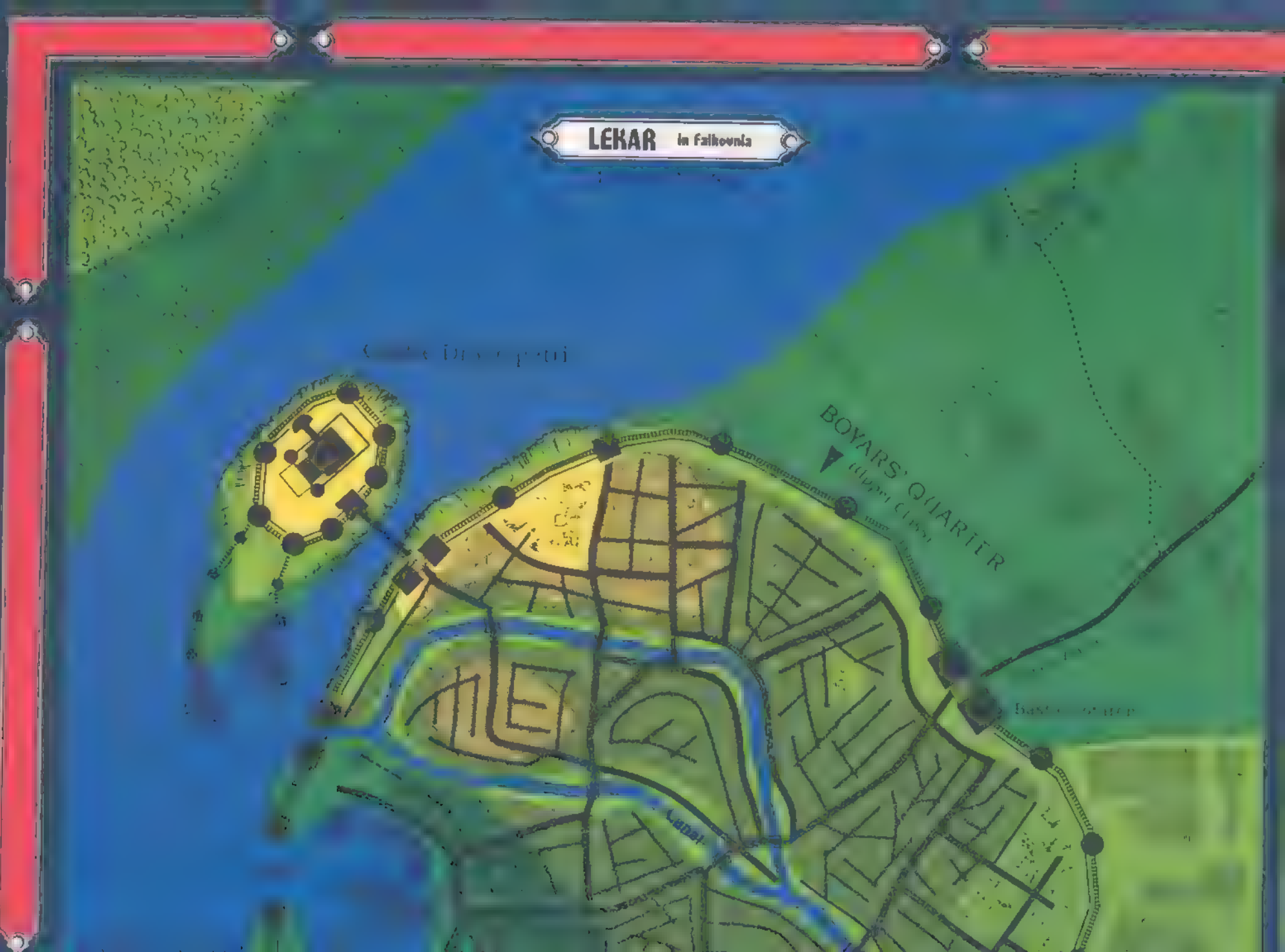
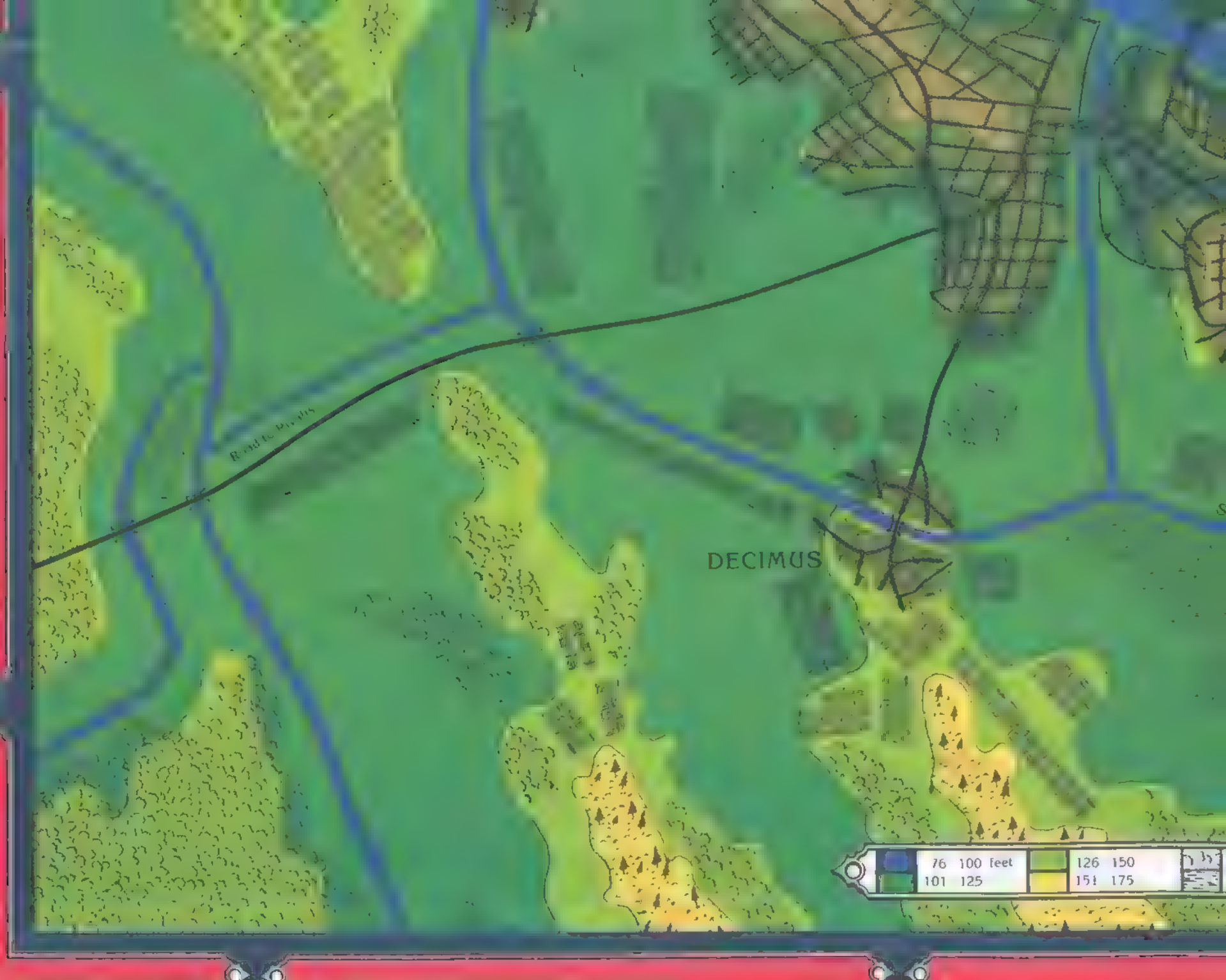

LEKAR in Falkovnia
BOYARS' QUARTER

Slaughterhouses
OPEN MARKET
76 100 feet
101 125
126 150
Main Streets
Alleys
Barren Rocky
Areas Burned by
Drakov's Militia

PORT-A-LUCINE in Dementlieu
N
QUARTIER MARCHAND
(Merchants' Quarter)
GUILD HALLS
Ruins of Ste. Mere des Larmes
LABORERS' TENEMENTS
Road to Chateaufaux
0 25 feet
26 50
5, 75
Fields

SILBERUAS in Falkovnia
1 inch = 500 feet
Summer Palace
Upper City
Lower City
NACHTFLIEGEN WOODS
Road to Lekar
Scharhag River
N
76 - 100 feet
101 - 125
126 - 150
151 - 175
Shallow water 1-6 fathoms
Deep water 7 + fathoms

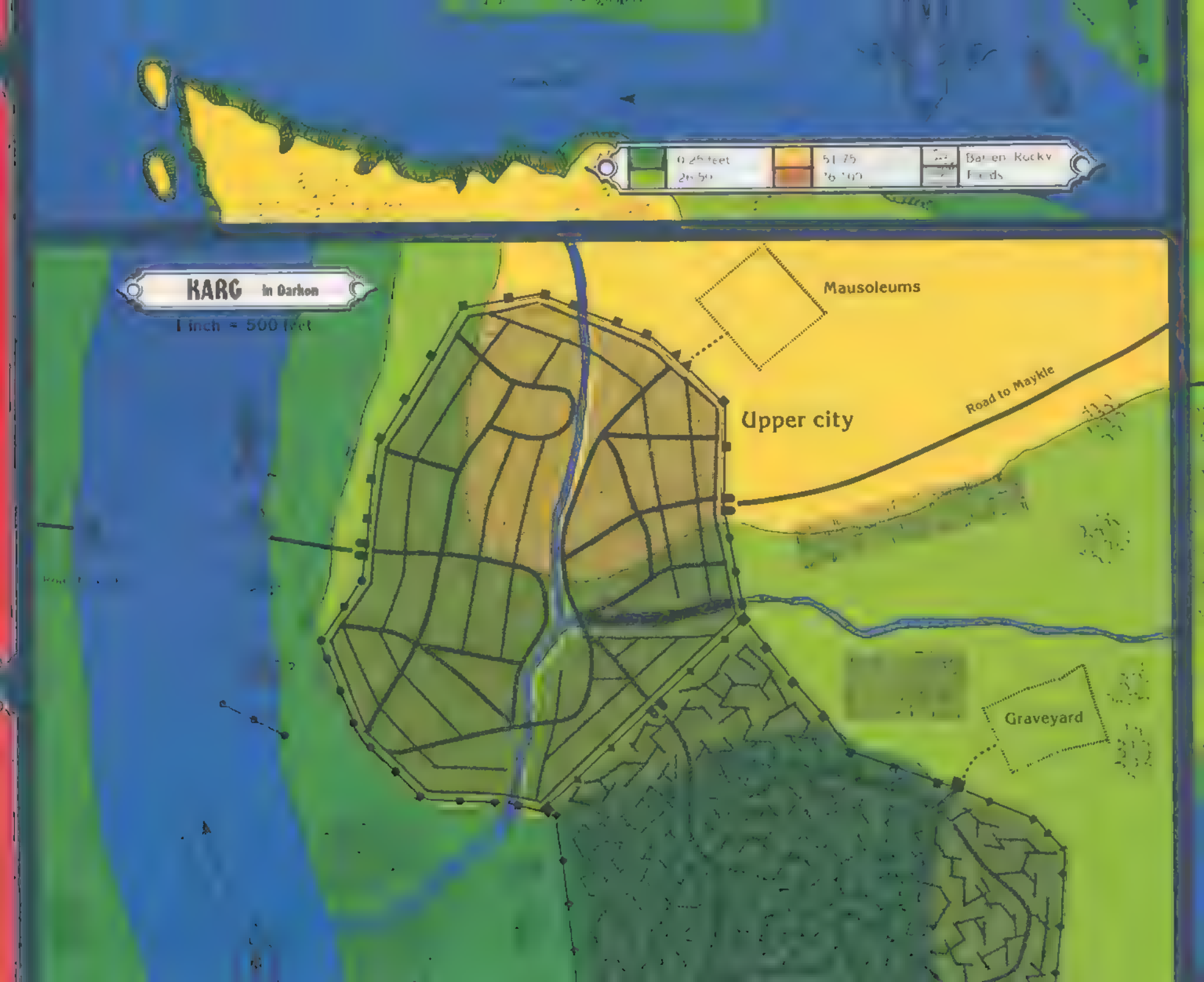
Road to Marthra Bay
DESPONDIA


DECIMUS
76 100 feet
101 125
126 150
151 175

in Darbon
1000 feet
N
DESOLATUS

Forest
Marsh
Rocky, Lt Forest

Sea of Sorrows
LUDENDORF in Lamordia
1 inch = 500 feet
Road to Rivalis
Outer Ward
Road to Aubrecker's Castle

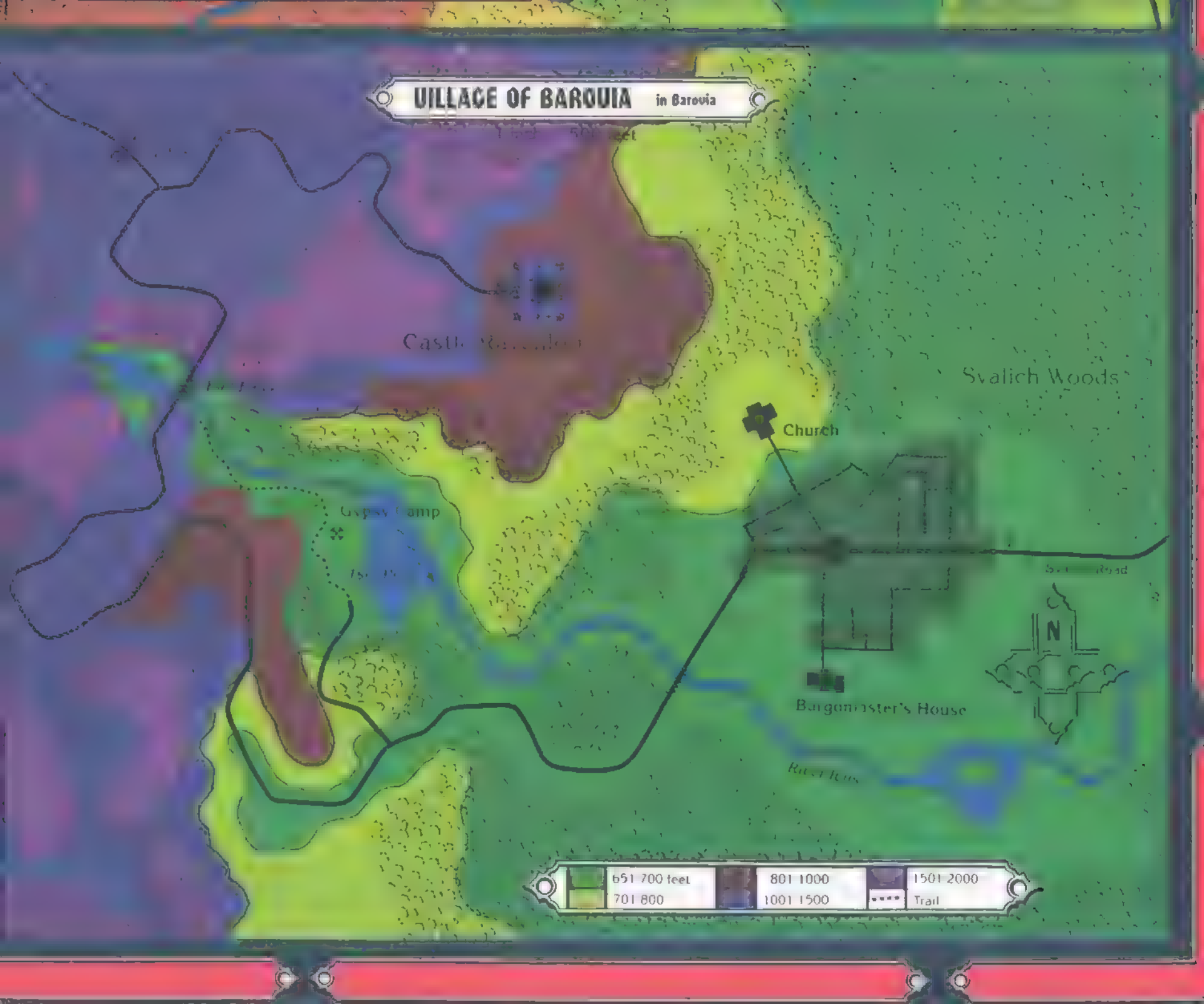

KARG in Darkon
1 inch = 500 feet
Mausoleums
Upper city
Road to Maykle
Graveyard

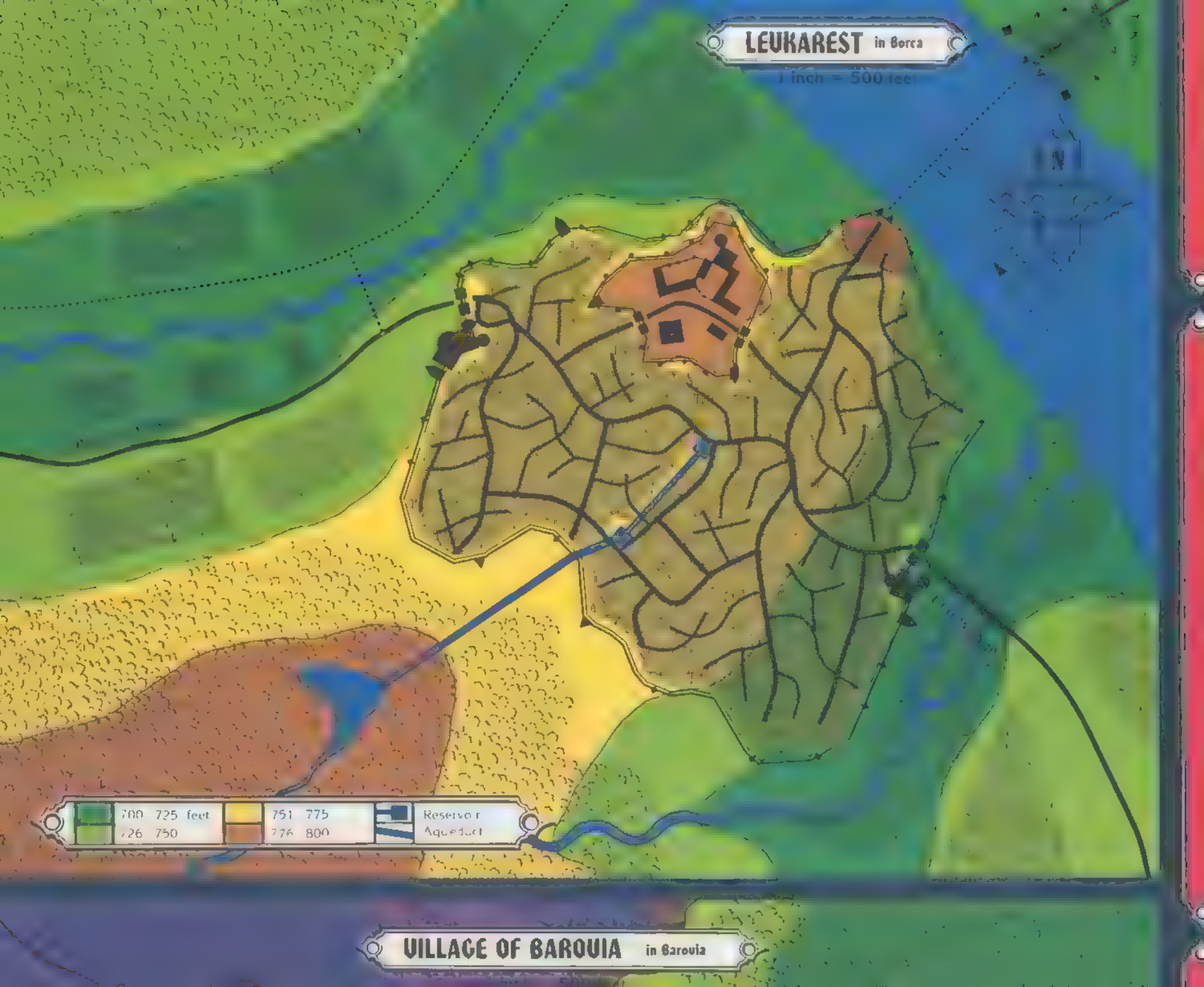
PONT-A-MUSEAU
in Richemulot

Bridge

Lower city
Graveyard
100 120 feet
21 130
141 160
Fields
Forest
Marsh
MORDENTSHIRE in Mordent
1 inch = 500 feet

Mayor's Home
Barracks and Gaol
Marketplace
Mausoleum
Sanitarium
Graveyard
Sea of Sorrows
Heather House
Lost Road
N
0 25 feet
26 50
51 75
Cliff
Fields
Marsh

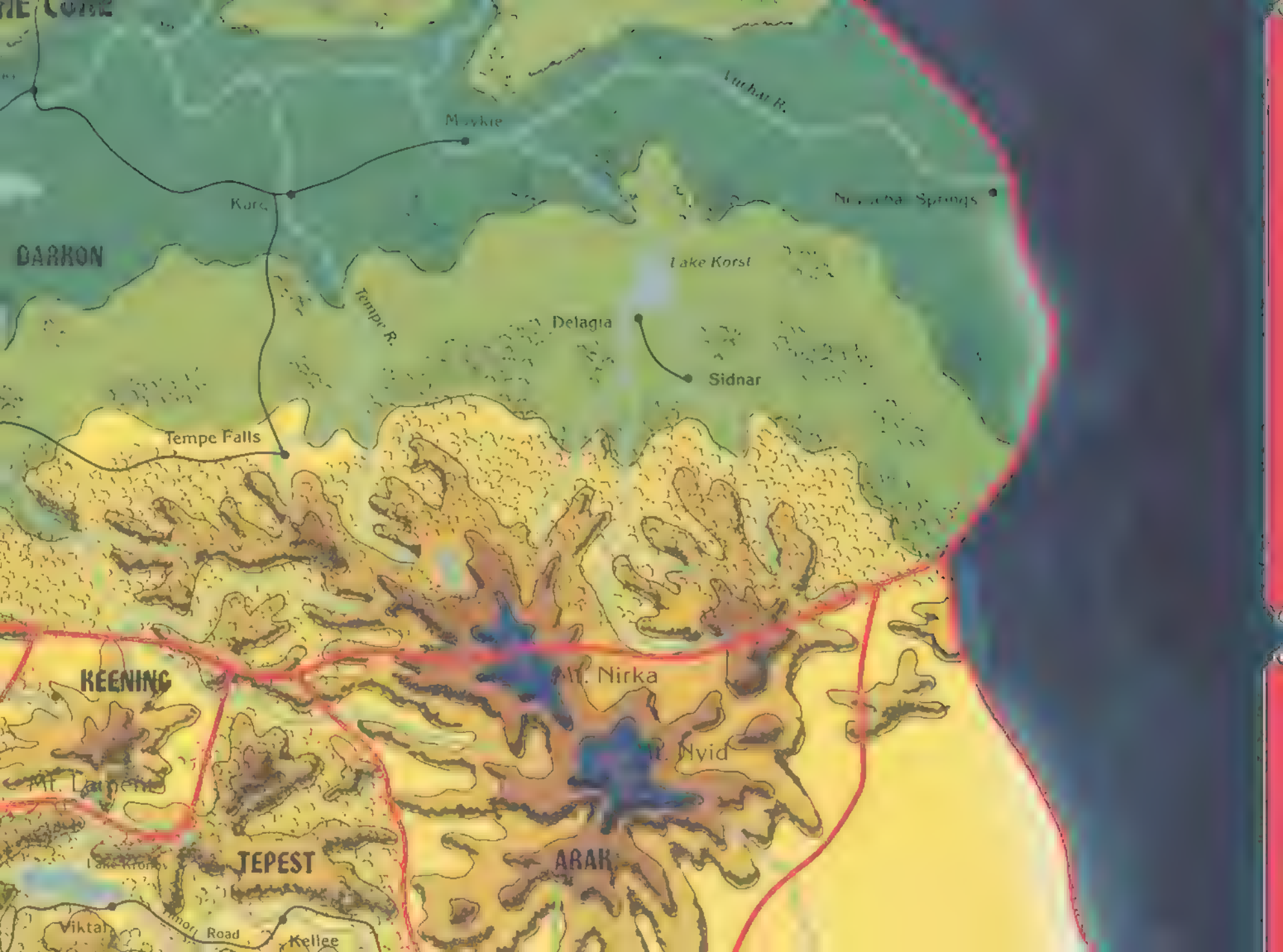

VILLAGE OF BAROVIA
in Barovia
Svalich Woods
Church
Gypsy Camp
Burgomaster's House
N
651 700 feet
701 800
801 1000
1001 1500
1501 2000
Trail


LEUKAREST in Borca
1 inch = 500 feet
N
700 725 feet
726 750
751 775
776 800
Reservoir
Aqueduct
VILLAGE OF BAROUIA in Barouia

Rave
Martha Bay
THE LANDS OF THE

nloff
Boxed Set
Neblus

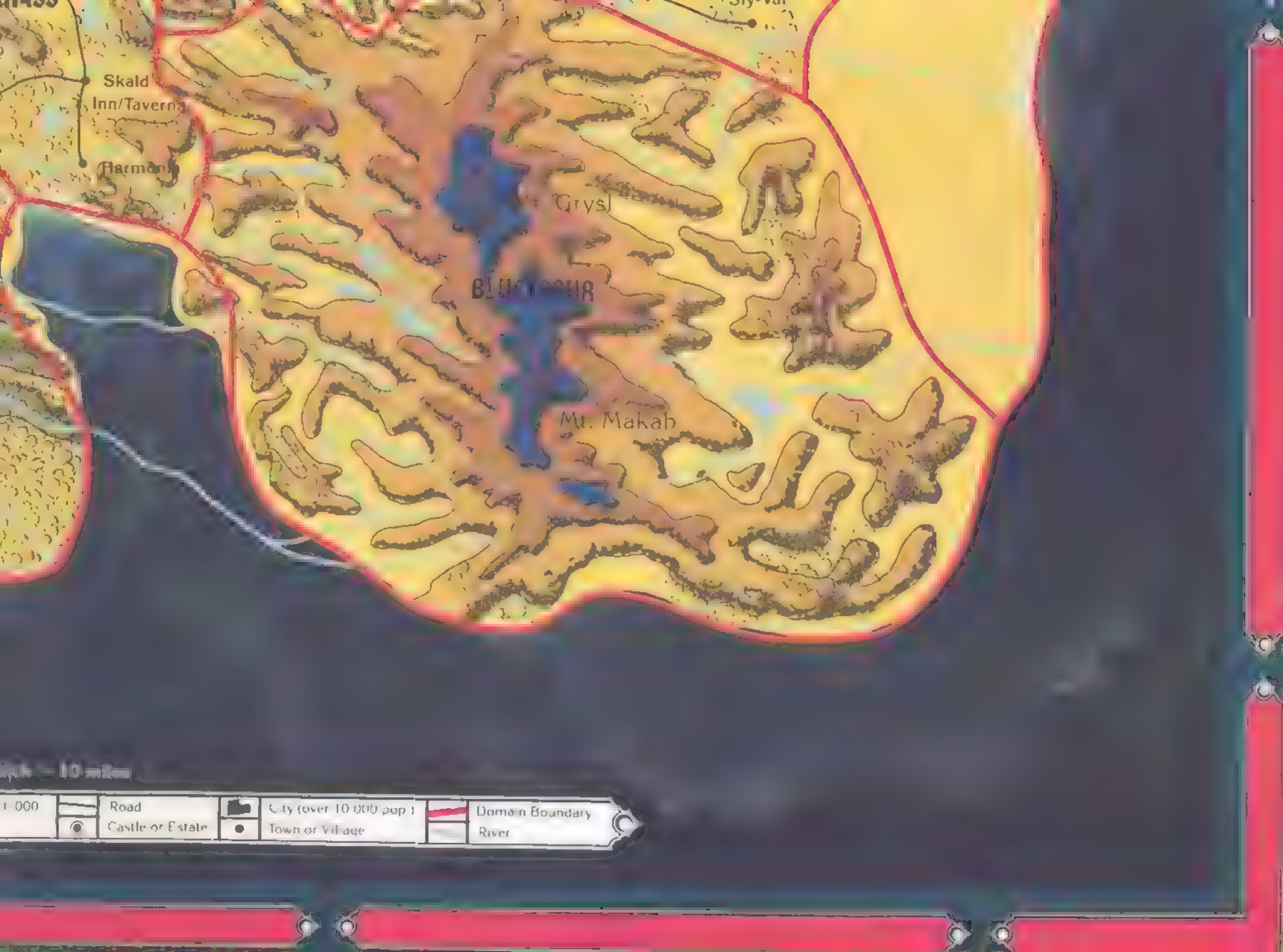
THE LANDS OF THE
THE SLEEPING BEAST
Rivalis
Mayvin
Neuturchtenburg
Lekar
DEMENTLIEU
FALKOUNIA
Morfenzi
G'HENNA
Zhukar

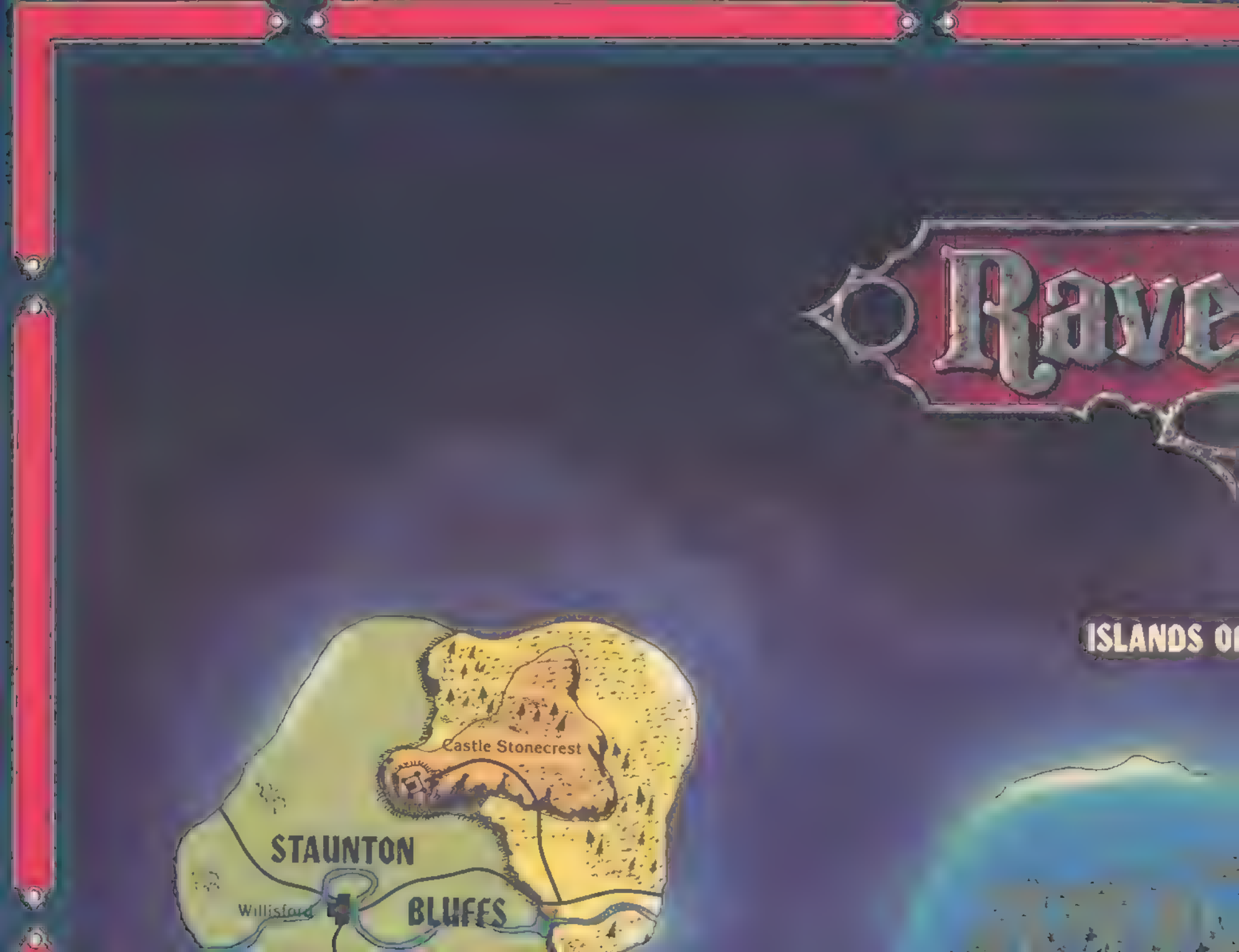

DARKON
Lake Korst
Delagia
Sidnar
Tempe Falls
KEENING
Mt. Nirka
Mt. Nvid
TEPEST
ARAK
Kellee

Aerie
Pont-a-Mureau
Dilisnya Estate
Lechberg
Ste. Ronges
RICHEMULOT
DORVINIA
Ulvin
Sturbeg
Vor Ziyden
Mortigny
Krezk
Levkarest
Borltsi Estate
ARKANDALE
BORCA
Luna R.
Zeidenburg
Castle
Kunadora
VERBREK
The
Circle
INVIDIA
GUNDARAK
Musade R.
Mal-Erek

Liara
Castle Faerhaaven
Egertus
Kantora
MARKOVIA
Markov's Estate
Mt. Gries
Monastery
NOUA UAASA
NIGHTMARE LANDS
Bergovitsa
Castle Ravenloft
Vallaki
Village of Barovia
Ivlis
Mt. Ghakis
BAROVIA
BALINOK MOUNTAINS
Arbora
HAZLAN
Hazlik's Estate
FORLORN
Toyalis
Sly Var
N

Mal-Erek
KARTAKASS
Nadraganrd Keep
Mar-Thelen
SITHICUS
Rotwold
Castle Pantara
Ungrad
VALACHAN
Scale: 1 inch
0 200 Feet
201 500
501 1000
1001 2500
2501 5000
5001 7500
7501 10 000
Forest


Skald
Inn/Taverna
Harman's
Grysl
Mt. Makab
Road
Castle or Estate
City (over 10 000 pop.)
Town or Village
Domain Boundary
River


Rave
ISLANDS O
Castle Stonecrest
STAUNTON
Willisford
BLUFFS

nlorr
TERROR
Muhar
HAR'AHR
Port d'Elhour

BLUFFS
Willisford
Willis R.
SOURAC
VECHOR
Abdok
Cliffs of Vesanis

Tristepas
Pharaoh's
Rest
Muladi
Temple
YAMASHA MTS
SRI RAJI

Pakat
Tvashsti
Paridon
Rhasiik R.
ZHERISIA
FARELLE
Kaynis
Mourfa R.
SANGUINIA
Kosovo
Mortilis

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Castle Guirglu
Tirgo
Fagarus
N
Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile
0 - 200 Feet
201 - 500
501 - 1000
1001 - 2500
2501 - 5000
5001 - 7500
7501 - 10,000
10,000 +
Road
Castle or Estate
City
Town or Village

1053

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